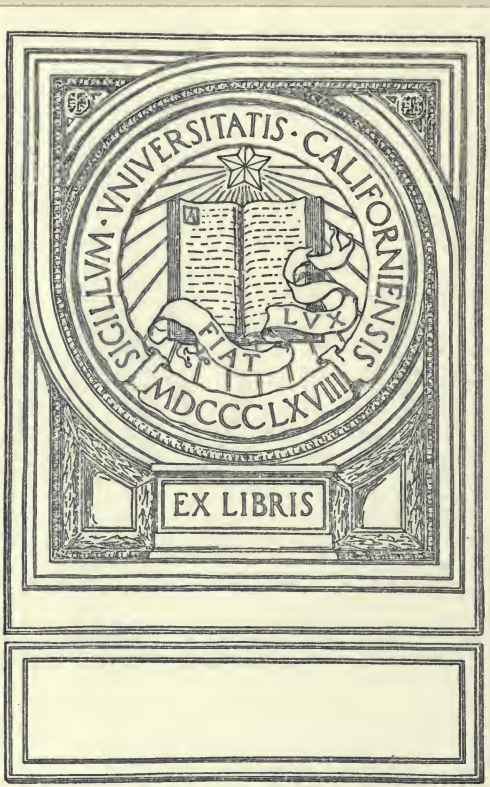
THE MEMOIRS OF THE BARONESS CECILE DE COURTOT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THE MEMOIRS

OF THE

BARONESS CECILE DE COURTOT

LADY-IN-WAITING TO THE PRINCESS DE LAMBALLE
PRINCESS OF SAVOY-CARIGNAN

COMPILED FROM THE LETTERS OF THE BARONESS TO FRAU VON ALVENSLEBEN, NÉE BARONESS LOË, AND THE DIARY OF THE LATTER

BY

HER GREAT-GRANDSON

MORITZ VON KAISENBERG
(MORITZ VON BERG)

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN
BY
JESSIE HAYNES

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OF VIRGINIA

PREFACE.

In an attic of my father's house in the neighbourhood of Halberstadt there stood, among other out-of-date and disused furniture, an ancient carved oak chest. It had belonged to my mother's grandmother, and on its lid was carved the name:

Sophie Hedwig von Alvensleben,
verwittwete [*widowed*] *von Bülow-Gross-Schwechten, geb.* [*née*]
von Rauchhaupt auf Hohenthurm u. Landin.
1692.

That was the mother of my great-grandfather; the oak chest might therefore well command our veneration as a family heirloom.

On the rare occasions when we children were permitted a peep into this chest, there was no end to our wonder and delight; for the spirit of a strange and by-gone world seemed to breathe from it and the marvellous things that lay therein. It was a very reliquary in our childish eyes.

Then very carefully with those dear slender hands of hers our mother would lift the things out one by one—curiously fashioned gowns trimmed with real old point, dainty little ivory fans, potpourri boxes and reticules, embroidered Pompadour bags with their varied store of tiny scissors, tabatières

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for Spanish snuff and the like. Besides all this there were ladies' poetry albums, illuminated prayer-books, costumes and fashion plates—in short, the chest was a treasure-house of bewildering delights, each of its fair owners, as it was handed down from one generation to the other, having stored away in it what seemed of special value in her eyes.

On the death of my beloved mother, this treasure passed into my hands. It was a frequent and never-failing delight to me to turn over its contents, and one day, quite at the bottom, under a quantity of old documents, I chanced upon a thick packet of letters tied together with a blue ribbon and having on the outside wrapper the inscription:

Cecile's letters. 1801 and 1802.

There were seventeen in all, some of them many pages long, written in French on stout—according to our present ideas coarse—paper, dropping to decay, torn in parts, and the writing half obliterated with age.

I began to decipher them and discovered that they were letters from the Baroness Cecile de Courtot, one time *dame d'atour* to the Princess de Lamballe, to my great-grandmother, Frau Anna Gottliebe Luise Wilhelmine von Alvensleben, *née* Freiin von Loë of Overdiek.

But this was not my only treasure trove. Besides many other letters dating from the beginning of the century, I found a red velvet book bearing on its cover the inscription "My Album." In this book, my great-grandmother, following the fashion of her day, had made a varied collection of things that had struck her fancy. Here I found somewhat overladen effusions of the poets of the time, her impressions on this or

the other subject, and accounts of the various important days of her life. By degrees the contents of the book assumed the character of a " diary," as we should call it now-a-days, though in reality it is more than that, for it includes conversations and descriptions of persons interesting to her, records important events that happened to them, and a multitude of other attractive matter not connected with herself.

What makes the book of special value in my eyes, however, is that it supplements the above-mentioned letters and helps one to thoroughly understand many of the occurrences of those days. Added to which, its pages reveal the deep feeling and noble character of my great-grandmother, a woman who for culture, charm, and lovable disposition ranked high in the opinion of her contemporaries and whose memory is still green in the family at the present day.

This diary is also written in French, which may be explained by the fact of my great-grandmother having been brought up in a French convent in Holland; besides that, in those days, it was the language of social intercourse in the upper classes.

Thus, from the following translation of the diary and the letters, I have endeavoured to construct a faithful picture of those times and the persons mentioned.

The Baroness Cecile de Courtot lived for eight years in the house of my great-grandparents at Kalbe on the Milde. She had been an eye-witness of the French Revolution, a sorely tried victim in the days of the Terror, and her position and rank brought her in contact with the Emperor Napoleon I. and many famous personages of that period.

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BARONESS CECILE DE COURTOT.

CHAPTER I.

THE HOME OF MY GREAT-GRANDPARENTS.

The Castle of Kalbe on the Milde in Altmark is a very ancient possession of the von Alvensleben family. In 1324, the Margrave Ludwig of Brandenburg bought it of the von Kroechers and made it the ancestral seat of the so-called "black line" of the great Alvensleben clan, already possessed of extensive property in the Altmark and the Mark Brandenburg.

None of the family archives go further back than 1400; any records before then belong to legendary history. Thus tradition says that the first Count Alvensleben was a descendant of that Alvoni who in 779 embraced Christianity. The stronghold of "Alvonslöwe" must have stood where the village of Alvensleben now lies, and thus the family of that name is one of the oldest in the district.

They had, from time immemorial, been great landed proprietors, and even the father of my great-grandfather—Werner III.—owned, besides the family seat of Kalbe, the domains of Klötze, Isenschnibbe, Dember, and several others.

He divided his estates among his four sons, and the so-called "Grosses Vorwerk"—the Great Manor House—at Kalbe fell to the share of my great-grandfather, Werner IV., who was born in 1752 and served as an officer in Kracht's regiment of infantry.

On the outbreak of the French Revolution, Austria, alarmed for the safety of the royal house so closely related to her own, declared war on the lawless insurgents in Paris, 1792.

Prussia was at that time in high favour with France, and the memory of the Great Frederick, in spite of the defeat at Rosbach,—probably on account of the king's infatuation for everything French,—was greatly revered in Paris. Again, the French regarded Prussia as their natural ally in the maintenance of the balance of power in Europe; indeed negotiations for an alliance were actually entered upon between the leaders of the revolutionary party and the Prussian government, based no doubt upon the supposition that a constant rivalry must exist between the successors of Maria Theresa and those of Frederick the Great for the overlordship of Germany.

Nothing, however, was further from the intentions of Frederick William II. than to range himself on the side of the revolutionaries, seeing that he regarded even a constitutional government as a danger to the monarchy. Accordingly he rejected the French overtures with scorn, joined the Coalition and declared war against France on February 7, 1792.

Austria set about her war preparations in her usual dilatory manner, and it was June before some 50,000 Austrian troops were massed on the Middle Rhine, while a Prussian army corps marched upon Cologne and Coblenz in three columns.

To the first—the most northerly—of these three columns belonged Kracht's infantry regiment in which my great-grandfather, Lieutenant-Captain von Alvensleben, was serving. The route of this column lay through Westphalia and the Mark districts. Here, in the neighbourhood of Dortmund, lay Overdiek, the old estate of the family von Loë, where my great-grandfather was presently quartered and so made the acquaintance of Anna Gottliebe, the only child of the Freiherr Johann Moritz von Loë, and won her young affections.

The girl, then in her twenty-first year and the last of this line of the great house of Loë, was a Roman Catholic and had been brought up and educated, after the fashion of her day, in a French convent in Holland. On the death of her mother she returned to Overdiek, and had scarcely been outside her native place since then. She was the idol of her old father, whose only regret was that she was not a boy and the estate must therefore go at his death to the Rhenish line of the Loës.

And now young Anna Gottliebe—or Annaliebe, as she was generally called—gave her heart to Werner despite his twenty years of seniority, and the lovers hoped in time to obtain the old father's consent to their union notwithstanding their difference of faith. When the regiment resumed its march, they parted with mutual assurances of undying love and vows that nothing in this world should finally separate them.

And yet it very nearly came to that, for Werner von Alvensleben received a severe bullet-wound in the chest during a skirmish of the advance guard at the siege of Verdun. He was brought with a sick-transport to Cologne, whence, at his daughter's urgent entreaty, old Baron Loë had him transferred to Overdiek.

Annaliebe's nursing did wonders, and the invalid soon re-

covered sufficiently—not for military service, but to be able to enter into possession of the estate at Kalbe, the death of his father having occurred meanwhile. The old Baron must have had opportunities during these days of Werner's illness to convince himself of his worth as well as of the sincere attachment between the two lovers, for he gave them his blessing and promised them a speedy union.

Meanwhile, the inglorious campaign against France came to an end; the Prussian troops returned home without effecting any of the objects for which they had been called out, and were put once more on a peace footing; and Werner von Alvensleben obtained his discharge with the rank of Captain.

A heavy cloud seemed to weigh upon Prussia in those days. The military renown of the Great Frederick's army was utterly annihilated by the dilatory, vacillating generalship of the Duke of Brunswick. With his undisciplined rabble General Dumouriez had defeated the veterans of the great king—reckoned hitherto invincible—and had driven them back upon the Rhine through the passes of Grandpré. "See," whispered many a man then to his neighbour, "the Marseillaise has beaten Prussian strategy; it would seem that the republic is, after all, the best form of government." Murmurs such as these might have been heard even in Berlin, and a great wave came surging across the Rhine only to break at last against the old Prussian provinces—Brandenburg, Altmark, Pommern—that stood by the Monarchy firm as a *rocher de bronze*.

All through that winter Werner von Alvensleben devoted himself energetically to the duties of his estate. He soon recovered completely from his wound and was very busy adorning the nest for his Annaliebe, whom he looked forward to bringing home in the early spring.

Suddenly, in January 1793, came the news of Baron Loë's serious illness. Werner instantly set out for Overdiek, but arrived only just in time to close the old father's eyes, whose last loving glances had been for his two children.

The Overdiek estate passed to the Rhenish cousins, while Annaliebe received the not inconsiderable unentailed property. Accompanied by an old aunt, a Fräulein von Lüning, she then left her home and went to Kloster Roda. Here she was instructed in the doctrine of the Protestant Church, was received into that communion, and on June 24th laid her hand, for better for worse, in that of her beloved Werner.

From my grandmother's descriptions and even my mother's, who had seen it as a child, the Great Manor House in Kalbe was a rambling and spacious abode of one storey only, built high and dry over the cellars, and in parts still thatched with straw. But there was all the more room in it, and the pleasant attic guest-chambers under its high-pitched roof were in great request among the numerous relatives of the family.

High thinking and gentle manners had ever been the rule in the dear old house, but the style of living was of the plainest. The long wars under Frederick the Great had drained the pecuniary resources of the country, and life on one of these baronial estates differed, in those days, in hardly any respect from that of the plain burgher households.

There was no question of a great retinue of servants; an old coachman, Johann, who had been twenty-five years in the family, and a few maids formed the entire establishment, and the scale of living was proportionately simple.

And yet how charming and homelike the old house must have been with its wide hall, the ceiling hung with harvest

garlands, and the walls with portraits of the ancestors—some of them in knightly armour with great plumes on their steel helmets, and the ladies with white veils on their almost invariable golden locks !

These ladies, as appeared from their coats of arms on the pictures, all belonged to Altmark and Brandenburg families, and the same names, Lüderitz, Arnim, Kroecher, Schulenburg, and so forth, occurred over and over again, so that the whole countryside might in truth be said to form one great family.

CHAPTER II.

THE EARLY MARRIED LIFE OF THE VON ALVENSLEBENS.

On the 3d of July the young couple made their entry into the festively garlanded house, and on the evening of this day my great-grandmother makes the first mention of her newly wedded life in her diary. Her words convey very happily the childlike piety of her temperament and her ardent affection for her husband. She writes, as I have said, in French.

July 3, 1793.

O dear and beautiful house, from henceforth to be my cherished home! My whole heart goes out to thee in greeting! I cannot let this first evening pass without setting down in these pages how great my happiness is. My heart is quite, quite full, for God has given me the best, the noblest man in all the world for my husband. How I love thee, dear old house, with all thy countless nooks and crannies out of which I seem to see the little kindly brownies peep who have worked so blithely for the long line of my dear Werner's forefathers. Oh, receive me too, the stranger, as a familiar friend! I will be a good housewife to you and strive to follow worthily in the footsteps of those who have gone before me.

But to Thee, my great and heavenly Father, I pray—take

not my Werner from me. Never would another moment's happiness be mine were I to lose him. Let Thy blessing be upon me, O my God, that I may live to repay my Werner for all his love to me.

ANNA GOTTLIEBE.

And thus my great-grandparents began their married life so full of tender affection and unity of soul. The first few weeks they lived to each other alone and the dear delights of their new companionship, but presently they were obliged to bethink them of their social obligations to the immense circle of relatives. First upon the list stood old Uncle von Briest and the Lüderitz family, then the Borstels, the Kroechers, the Bismarcks, and a host of others, and it was weeks before the newly wedded couple finished their round of visits. The diary contains the whole list, and such a tour can have been no slight strain upon the young wife, for under the last name—that of old Aunt von Kroecher—she writes: "Thank Heaven, it is over!" Truly—

"Go East, go West,
At home is best."

This light-hearted and yet so practical great-grandmother of mine must have been a very bewitching little lady. The pastel portrait we possess gives but an inadequate idea of her. At any rate, my dear mother always declared that the picture in no way did justice to her beauty. Her eyes, in particular, which were intensely blue though they could, at times, look almost black, must have been wonderfully beautiful with her red-gold hair. The poet Gleim, who was an intimate friend of the house, frequently came over from Halberstadt and stayed

for days at a time, and was an enthusiastic admirer of the fair *châtelaine*.

The turmoil and bustle of the return visits once over, the enormous circle of acquaintances narrowed down to a comparatively small number of families in the immediate neighbourhood, on whom Annaliebe bestowed her more intimate friendship.

Those were still the "good" old days—the days of blithe and simple home life, of the cultivation of an exaggerated sentimentality and perfervid romance, such as is hardly conceivable in the present day.

At that time there were two persons—besides her Werner—for whom my great-grandmother had formed an enthusiastic attachment, namely, dear old Uncle Briest, who lived near by at Schmetzdorf and was a frequent visitor at the Manor House, and secondly, Frau von Bismarck-Schönhausen, *née* von Miltitz. This great-aunt of the mighty Chancellor was already an old lady in those days, but that she could, nevertheless, inspire Annaliebe's young heart with fervent admiration is amply proved by the following entry in the diary:

August 24, 1793.

Oh, what exquisite delight has been mine to-day! Frau von Bismarck was here! Would that I could oftener enjoy the company of this high-souled, generous-hearted woman! I was in the seventh heaven. How marvellous is her unassailable tranquillity of spirit! I listened in wonder and emotion to the heart-stirring words that fell from her lips. It is my dearest wish to follow in her steps and become like her. Shall I tell her some day how ardently I admire and love her? I think I shall venture. Alas, that her home is so far from here and so difficult of access! I wish I could see her every day.

Besides those already mentioned, two pastors' families in the near neighbourhood were included in the circle of my great-grandparents' intimates—that of Deacon Müller of Kalbe and dear old Pastor Nertz with his little roly-poly wife who belonged to the neighbouring Bühne. They saw a great deal of each other, and Annaliebe often consulted the Frau Pastorinnen in any little housekeeping difficulty that turned up.

Thus, the diary tells us, on a certain afternoon in the middle of August my great-grandparents and the two families already mentioned were assembled round the coffee-table in the Manor House garden. How often have I not heard descriptions of that coffee-table from my mother and my grandmother, who both remembered it well! In the middle of the big garden table stood the tall coffee-pot under an embroidered cosy and encircled by dainty little cups and a crystal sugar-bowl. Beside it on a tray was black country bread, fresh butter, and golden honeycomb—cakes and the like were reserved for highdays and holidays. The gentlemen were smoking long pipes; the great tobacco-box filled with Dutch canaster stood on the table, and beside it a very simple contrivance—two little bottles filled respectively with phosphorus and sulphur and a bundle of small match-sticks—for lighting the pipes.

A newspaper, too, lay upon the table, a diminutive copy of the "Berliner Neueste Nachrichten," which appeared only once a week. Postage rates were very high in those days—the smallest letter cost four new groschen—the progress of the mails was extremely slow and their delivery subject to all sorts of unforeseen accidents. It had become a settled thing that on the day this newspaper and the Aschaffenburg News, taken by the Deacon, arrived the two pastors' families should fore-

gather at the Manor House for coffee. The gentlemen would study the "Political and Literary News," while the ladies discussed domestic questions, casting, maybe, a cursory glance over the advertisements.

To-day's paper had brought the latest tidings of the army in Holland, affording special interest to the gentlemen. For Prussia had joined the second Coalition against France, in which England was also a party. The combined forces of the Allies amounted to nearly two hundred thousand men, and stretched along the frontier from Lille to Basle. But it was ever the old story—there was no real organiser, each commander did what seemed good in his own eyes, and anything approaching to unity of action was simply non-existent.

According to the Berlin newspaper, however, the latest accounts were altogether satisfactory. The Austro-Prussian Army, under the youthful Archduke Charles, had defeated General Dumouriez on the Roer, and the Prussian commander, the Duke of Brunswick-Pels, had afterwards taken the fortified towns of Roermonde and St. Michel. The two Generals now stood almost on the rear of the French.

These tidings were naturally very gratifying, but the descriptions of the terrible doings in Paris filled the three men with horror. It was too much for the ladies. They rose, declaring, as my great-grandmother records, that they would hear no more of these revolting brutalities, so with arms interlaced they proceeded to wander through the narrow box-bordered paths of the garden.

Oh that garden! I could paint it down to the smallest detail from my mother's descriptions. Whenever, as children, she and her brother and sister came to visit the grandmother her first thought was always to get into the garden, which,

with its groves of fruit-trees and gooseberry-bushes, its wealth of wall-flower and basil, its blaze of carnations and glowing red roses, its prim old-fashioned flower-beds and broad grassy lawns, seemed to her a very Eldorado. These flowers were Frau Annaliebe's special pride and joy, and she bestowed much time and care on their cultivation.

So the three ladies pursued their leisurely way along the garden paths, the hostess pointing out the various perfections of her apple and pear trees and finally leading them to a corner of the garden, where an army of bees was busily attending to the duties of the hive.

Suddenly from the highroad came the sound of a horn, and the postboy played his finest tune as a signal that he brought the long-desired letters and newspapers; whereupon the three ladies hastened back to their husbands in the hope that there might be something for them.

Werner was already waving excitedly to his little wife, and handed her a letter when she came up. It was from Major Vollrath von Rauchhaupt, a cousin of Werner's, and ran as follows:

ROERMONDE, August 15, 1793.

If I had not so reliable a means of conveyance, my dear Cousin, I would not risk writing to you from this distance. Also you know me better, I hope, than to imagine that anything less than a matter of real importance would induce me to write a letter at all. Your letters always afford me the greatest pleasure, for they bring me news of valued friends and well-beloved relatives. If only the writing itself had not to be done! It is that which causes me so much *chagrin*.

But to proceed. First of all, let me say how glad I am that

all is well with you and the dear Frau Cousine. My sister assured me that you were happy—that is the chief thing to be considered. And now I come to the subject of my letter. I have a great favour to ask of you, though more especially at the hands of my beloved and respected Cousine, whom the matter chiefly concerns. To plunge therefore at once "in medias res," as we used to say at school, I am much concerned about a young French lady, a refugee here, Baronesse de Courtot by name, whom I should greatly like to confide to your kind care. She has suffered terrible things. She was *dame d'atour* to the hapless Princesse de Lamballe, and very nearly fell a victim herself to the guillotine. When actually on her way to the scaffold she was rescued as by a miracle, and then fled the country and took refuge here.

Before going further, I must, I suppose, give you a full and circumstantial account of how I came to fall in with the lady, for I should indeed be hurt if I were misjudged by you and you suspected anything in the nature of a *liaison*. Pity alone inspires my request on behalf of the unfortunate lady. Besides, you know me better and will not do me that injustice.

Well, then, I am quartered with my regiment in the little fortified town of Roermonde, which we took about a week ago—our first success in this pitiful war. We generally waste the precious time that cannot be recalled in mere child-play. There never has been any serious purpose in the management of this war. I am lodging in the house of a certain Madame la Saque, in the *Rue de la Harpe*, where please address your next letter.

The day before yesterday, this worthy lady came to me and implored my assistance, saying that she was in the great-

est anxiety about a sick young lady who had taken refuge with her the evening before. A Vicomte d'Aubignac had come to her and begged for shelter for a lady whom he had saved out of the horrible whirlpool of Paris, and the terrible thing was that the lady's fiancé, a Vicomte de Trellissak, had lost his life while contriving her escape. Having confided the lady to Madame's care her companion immediately returned to France, leaving her sufficient money, however, to continue her journey. My landlady begged me to come to her room that I might hear the unfortunate lady's story from her own lips. She appeared to be not only physically ill but to have sustained a severe mental shock, for she simply lay with wide and staring eyes moaning incessantly, "*Sauvez-moi, sauvez-moi!*"

Knowing Madame to be a thoroughly good and honest soul, incapable of falsehood, I accompanied her at once. You know, my dear Cousin, that I am easily moved, and when I saw this lovely and distressful creature gazing up at me with her great dark eyes while she cried, "*Sauvez, sauvez-moi*—take me away—I must get to Germany!" why, I was touched to the heart. I determined to save her if it were anyway possible, and then I suddenly thought of you and your peaceful home. If you are willing, I can manage to have her conveyed to you and so placed in safety.

Oh, compassion is indeed a precious sentiment and a gift from above—of your charity give this poor hapless fugitive a shelter!

There is, I know, often a wide gulf between wishing and being able to do a thing, but if it lies in your power to accede to my request, then write me without delay. If *la chère Cousine* consents to undertake this Samaritan work, I could arrange

for the lady to join a sick-transport which leaves here shortly and takes its way over Cassel to Magdeburg. But you must send me word at once, for I do not think our reign here will last long. They say the *Sansculottes* intend advancing against us in great hordes. I have had more than enough of this sort of thing—am sick and tired of the whole accursed business. To be subordinate to ignoramuses and fools, against whom there is no redress but to denounce them fruitlessly to the higher powers, is not by any means my idea of service. Write soon. I embrace you with all the ardour of my affectionate heart. I kiss the hand of the amiable Lady Cousin.

Always your heartily obliged Friend and Cousin,

ALBRECHT VOLLRATH VON RAUCHHAUPT,

Major.

The following entry in the diary records my great-grandmother's impressions as to the reception of the Baroness:

August 31st.

The answer to Cousin Vollrath's letter has been despatched, and so we may expect the poor friendless fugitive ere long, for my dear Werner approves of the plan. We must hasten now to get everything in readiness for our charge. I shall have the two pleasant rooms in the east gable, which were Aunt Georgine's for so many years, prepared for her. There she will have the beautiful view across the garden to the forest and the first friendly greeting of the morning sun as it glances through the green vine leaves at the window. There, too, I shall hang up my Bibi's cage—the canary Werner gave me on my birthday—and he will cheer the poor sufferer with his gay song.

Oh, what trials has she not encountered already during her short life! I visited our good Pastor yesterday and went through the newspapers again with him, reading of the horrors which took place in Paris and more especially those accounts dealing with the days of the Terror. There lies the whole packet now, and I cannot restrain my tears when I recall these ghastly deeds and how they butchered that dear Princess. Oh, poor, poor Queen and you too, most unhappy friend, who were compelled to stand by and see the murderers carry the beautiful blond head past the windows of the Temple on a pike! Oh, I shudder even to think of it! And you, poor martyr—I do not know you yet, but in my heart I call you friend, for you seem no stranger to me. Will your sweet face be as I have pictured it, I wonder? Oh, God, aid me in my endeavours to win back this poor sad heart to take pleasure once more in Thy beautiful world! Whatever lies in my power shall be done.

Accordingly, the diary shows us the Alvenslebens much occupied during the next few days with preparations for receiving the Baroness. There were various decorative additions to be made in the rooms—a flower-table to be furnished with the pick of their plants, friendly pictures to be hung upon the walls; the kind-hearted creature even sent over to the neighbouring town of Stendal for a dainty little work-table, and both husband and wife vied with each other in their forethought for the comfort of the expected guest.

Old Uncle Briest seems to have come over now and then from his estate near by. He was the last of his ancient race, a hardy, jovial old man of sixty and a bosom friend of the newly married couple. He must have been a somewhat

peculiar but extremely kind-hearted man. My great-grandmother never mentions him without adding some term of endearment. It is "Uncle Heini" here and "our dear old Briest" there, and he was always to be depended on for sound advice or assistance in any emergency. It would seem that their plans for the stranger did not, at first, meet with his approval, for the diary says: "To be sure, Uncle Briest considers I have been unduly hasty in my decision, for who can tell what sort of creature this Frenchwoman may turn out to be, and, in any case, a third person is always 'de trop' in a newly married household! You dear old bachelor, what do you know about it? Do you know me and my Werner so little as to imagine that anything or anybody in this world could come between us and our love?"

Eventually Uncle Briest's kind heart must have got the upper hand, for he sends a beautiful deerskin rug for the room of "Madame de la Cour," as he calls her, and is apparently most impatient for her arrival. More than this, he actually proposes, when the time comes, to fetch the lady from Magdeburg. This idea, however, was not to Annaliebe's taste. "I think," she writes, "it will be best for us to manage it alone," and adds: "Oh, Werner, my beloved, how we will vie with one another in our care for this sorely tried stranger—are we not wholly one in all our thoughts and feelings?"

The next fortnight passed in eager expectation of further instruction from cousin Rauchhaupt, but day after day went by and no letter came. At last, on the 5th of September, the post brought the desired news. Cousin Vollrath writes as follows:

Still in ROERMUNDE,
August 30, 1793.

My dear Werner :

Mademoiselle has just left with a sick-transport for Cassel, accompanied by a nurse engaged by my landlady. The lady was ill for some days, and is still terribly weak and exhausted. It is to be hoped she will stand the long journey; she positivly yearns to be with you. She made me tell her a great deal about you. At Cassel she will take the post and should, by my reckoning, reach Magdeburg on the 9th or 10th of September, and will put up at the Lamb Inn. Please fetch her from there. You will find her a gentle and amiable lady, but desperately low-spirited still. She has won all hearts here. I do not suppose we shall be here much longer. When I get back I will come and look you up. Meanwhile, my kindest remembrances to my fair Cousine, as also my deeply grateful thanks to her for having acceded to my request.

Ever your faithful cousin,

V. VON RAUCHHAUPT.

CHAPTER III.

CECILE'S ARRIVAL.

So the decisive moment had come. The last few days before the journey passed quickly, the rooms set apart for the guest were once more thoroughly reviewed, and on the 8th of September the great family chaise, with its stout gray horses, drew up before the door, and the Alvenslebens started for Magdeburg, travelling by way of Gardelegen and Stendal.

After all, Mademoiselle did not arrive till late on the night of the 11th. The lady must have been much exhausted, for it was only after two days of the most complete rest and quiet that she could take the road again and push on to Kalbe. In the mean time, Annaliebe bought various necessaries for her visitor, a brief account of which is among the papers. The Baroness had no luggage with her but a small valise, and possessed no other clothes but those she stood in, for which untoward circumstances my great-grandmother had to take thought.

Nevertheless, these purchases appear to have been somewhat unwelcome to the lady; at any rate, she at once refunded the sum laid out upon them, and told Frau von Alvensleben she had already written to her old nurse, Madame Gervais, in Paris, Rue de Riccot, to send her through the banking house of Simon in Paris a trunk containing valuables which she,

the Baroness, had left with Madame Gervais before her flight.

The old nurse, Margarethe, on whom the sick lady had come to depend very much, accompanied the party to Kalbe, sitting beside old Johann on the box. The travellers reached home on the evening of the 16th, having rested one day at Stendal for the invalid's benefit.

Annaliebe's first impressions of her guest are duly recorded in the diary.

September 18, 1793.

Oh, my timid little birdie—my poor, poor Cecile ! How I thank Heaven now that I decided to receive her. Alas, what terrible misery there is in the world ! When I helped the dear creature out of the coach at Magdeburg and met those piteous, deeply sorrowful eyes that gazed at me half vacantly and yet with such a wistful hungering for love, a world of tenderness filled my heart for the hapless girl. My arms opened of themselves, I drew her to me and mingled my tears with hers as she lay weeping on my bosom. From that moment, she won my love, my whole soul went out to her and called her sister, and when Cecile—for that is her sweet and musical name—whispered in her broken German, " Du Gute, du Liebe, du ! " I caught with delight the sound of the dear familiar *thou* and at once determined in my newly awakened affection to use the same address with her.

And how quite, quite different she is from what I had pictured ! I expected, from what I knew of her previous history, to find a spoiled *grande dame* who would have great difficulty in accustoming herself to our simple country life; and instead, here is a shy and gentle girl, who with her dark eyes and beautiful features looks younger than I, although she says she

is 30. These dark eyes, with their black eyebrows and lashes, form a most peculiarly attractive contrast to her reddish fair hair. How bewitching she must have been when those lovely eyes could laugh—now they look as if they had long forgotten how. Grief has already graven her runic lines on the white brow and woven a silver thread or two among the beautiful tresses, and the piteous little mouth is ever drawn as if on the point of weeping. Her whole appearance is so inexpressibly affecting that I can scarce restrain my tears whenever I look at her.

And the gratitude of the sweet soul! Her eyes are forever seeking mine, and she cannot bear me to leave her side. My Werner is quite jealous of her, and says the stranger is drawing me away from him. Oh, you dear, foolish fellow, as if anything in the world could draw me away from you! However, it is devoutly to be hoped that she will soon be quite restored to health.

Two days later.

I am half afraid that Cecile is going to be seriously ill! It would not be surprising considering all she has gone through in the last few months. The symptoms are bad—she sleeps very little and, do what I will, I cannot persuade her to eat more than a mouthful now and then. She simply sits with her hands in her lap, silent and brooding, gazing into the far distance.

Over and over again in these sunny autumn days I have begged her to come down into the garden with me, but in vain—she is tired, she says, and cannot be induced to leave her low armchair at the window. She broods and broods, and the tearless eyes have at times a glassy stare as if they saw some dreadful sight.

I cannot ask our good old friend Dr. Nikolai to come and exert his quiet reassuring influence over her, and also to examine into her state of health. God restore the poor thing soon both in mind and body !

October 24th.

These have been weeks of heavy trouble and anxiety. It fell out as I feared, and my poor Cecile has been sick well-nigh unto death of brain fever. The first signs of the fever showed themselves on the evening of the 25th of last month, and by the time the doctor arrived she was delirious, and the good old man shook his gray head ominously. He stayed with us for three days and shared my watch at Cecile's bedside. What terrible days and nights were those I passed ministering to the poor sufferer! Hours full of anxious care, while her fever-ridden spirit wrestled with the dread fiends of her delirium. What have I not had to listen to! Her mind was ever busy with images of death and of the scaffold, and an overwhelming terror lay upon her all the time.

Oh, it was heart-rending to sit there and listen to her ravings and to be powerless to help her! Only when I laid my cool hand on her burning brow would she sometimes grow a little quiet and murmur, "*O c'est bon, c'est bon.*" Or she would whisper fond words of love: "Oh, my beloved—my Hector, is that you beside me ?" Then her great eyes would open wide in mad terror and she shrieked: "Hector, Hector, do not leave me !"—and again the low fond murmur: "Dear one, they told me you were dead, but there you are at my side —it cannot be long now till our marriage . . . But what is that —what do I see !"—and her little hands clutched at her loosened hair—"my Princess's beloved face . . . the fair curls wave around it . . . and there—there is blood! . . . Hector—

Hector, you too?" She clenched her hands and started up in bed, throwing herself from side to side in such a frenzy that I could not hold her alone and had to call the faithful old Margarethe to my assistance.

Thus long, long hours dragged past and brought her no sleep, no relief. Scene after scene of the horrid tragedies she had witnessed rose up before her out of the cauldron of her delirium, and she constantly murmured different names, amongst which I think I caught that of the Queen Marie Antoinette.

At last, after many troubled and anxious days, the longed-for crisis set in. Her poor tortured spirit flared up once again in wildest ravings, then sank away into deep sleep—her only chance of life. After a fortnight of overwhelming uncertainty, the doctor could give me hope that the worst was over and that Cecile might recover. I thanked God with all my heart and soul.

For nearly three days Cecile lay in this deep sleep. The fever subsided by degrees, and when, at last, she opened her eyes, they wore a totally new expression. The frenzy, the delirium had left them. She looked about her at first bewildered in the darkened room into which only a pale streak of sunlight entered between the drawn curtains, then her eyes fell on me and a tender smile played round her pretty mouth. With a whispered "Annaliebe" she tried to stretch a slender waxen hand towards me, but it sank feebly back upon the bed. Her whole delicate form seemed but a shadow, the fever had so wasted her. So I clasped the little hand in mine and bent over the sweet transparent face and kissed her. Filled with gratitude to Heaven, our fingers lovingly intertwined, I

murmured softly: "I thank Thee, O my Father, that Thou hast given her back to life and me!"

All went well after that. Cecile's appetite improved, her strength gradually returned, and to-day she has been allowed to leave her bed for an hour. We packed her round with pillows and carried her to her favourite seat by the window, and there she sits now gazing out into the clear autumn sunshine.

We were able to prepare a pleasant surprise for her, too. A week after Cecile fell ill, Werner received information that a chest containing valuables, sent by Simon of Paris over England, was awaiting the Baroness Courtot at the banking house of Magnus in Magdeburg. Three days ago, Werner went over and brought it back with him.

The doctor had advised me to try and distract our invalid's thoughts, so Werner proposed that I should open the chest and see if I could find something in it to give her pleasure. And sure enough, just under the lid lay two portraits, one of an elderly gentleman in the uniform of the French Gardes, and the other of a high-bred and beautiful lady, both of whom I at once judged from the likeness to be Cecile's parents.

As soon as my poor pet was settled in her armchair at the window I asked her to shut her eyes a moment, then I propped up the two pictures on the little work-table in front of her, and told her to open them again. "Oh, my dear, dear father and mother!" she cried, snatching up the portraits and kissing first one and then the other. And then at last, at last—the long-deferred tears rushed to her eyes, and she wept long and profusely.

"Thank God for that!" exclaimed dear old Nikolai, overjoyed. "Now all will be well. It is a mercy that we have at

last got the young lady to this point," and he pressed Cecile's little hand tenderly. "Courage, little one—we shall soon put colour again into those pale cheeks!"

May the good old gentleman's words speedily be fulfilled!

CHAPTER IV.

CECILE.

This improvement was steadily maintained, and Cecile must presently have quite recovered, for towards Christmas my great-grandmother's diary contains brief notices as to preparations for that festival shared by the two ladies, also a list of her presents to Cecile and to her husband.

Then came the New Year of 1794. The spring and summer passed, and on June 24th we find the following entry in Annaliebe's diary:

Thank God my Cecile has now quite recovered, for which I am more especially glad, as my present condition demands much care. My beloved Werner, in his fond anxiety for me, wished at last to engage a paid nurse for Cecile, but happily there is no further need for that. Bodily Cecile is indeed much better. I only wish I could say the same of her spirits. It is true, she is less depressed and takes a little more interest in the small events of our daily life, so that I trust her poor, sorely wounded heart is beginning to heal. Still there is one thing I cannot but think injurious to her—she persists in hiding away her grief deep out of sight. If she would only once open her heart freely to me, she would surely find relief. But no—never a word of the past. How gladly would I help her to bear the sorrows of those years; but she shrinks like a sen-

sitive plant at the slightest allusion to them, and the dreadful fixed look of horror comes into her eyes that frightened me so much at first. I know that she frets in secret, and that is always the worst form of heartsickness.

To give one instance among many. We are enjoying a perfectly marvellous summer this year—every day a blaze of sunshine—and if it rains at all, then only in the night. On one such dewy fresh morning lately Werner and I were taking a walk in our beautiful beechwood—I have been ordered much exercise in the fresh air at present—when we suddenly caught sight of Cecile in one of the side paths. She was unaware of our presence, and was pacing slowly along with drooping head, apparently absorbed in her sad thoughts. Presently she stopped, covered her face with her hands, and great tears trickled between her fingers.

Can the wings of her spirit be hopelessly broken? And yet all life lies before her. No; she must not be permitted to enclose herself hermetically in the web of her sorrow. In her youth she winged her flight bravely into life—she must find her way back to it again.

I hastened to her side, and caught the words of yearning sorrow I had so often heard from her lips: "Oh Hector, my one and only love, why did you leave me behind alone!" Then I took her fondly in my arms and implored her to lighten the burden of her grief by opening her heart to me. But she only shook her head mournfully. "Give me time, Annaliebe; I cannot bear yet to speak of my troubles. It would only do me harm. Give me time—I shall come round."

And so I shall leave the dear soul in peace; the right moment will come all in good time.

In the last few days her spirits seem to have improved

somewhat. Yesterday, for instance, I found her searching in her trunk, which hitherto she has only eyed nervously. Presently she found a picture which she took out and kissed fondly. I am very glad, for if she once finds the courage to occupy herself with the things that recall the past to her, she will soon be able to give utterance to her grief.

I myself feel far from well just now. Was the nursing of Cecile too much for me, or the whole episode perhaps too exciting? The doctor admonishes me to take the greatest care of myself, and so it is perhaps just as well that Cecile should not confide her harrowing story to me for the present. I might take it too greatly to heart, though for her sake I would gladly risk it. Oh Heavenly Father, take me under Thy protecting care, more especially during the fast-approaching trial that awaits me!

In the middle of July, scarcely three weeks after the last entry in my great-grandmother's diary, a little daughter was born to the Alvenslebens. It went hardly with poor Annaliebe, and she was dangerously ill. Cecile Courtot nursed her devotedly, the two friends thus exchanging parts, the one who had hitherto enjoyed such unceasing care becoming the self-sacrificing nurse in her turn. It was long before the young mother recovered, and that she eventually quite regained her health and strength was entirely owing to the tender and unremitting devotion of her husband and her faithful nurse Cecile.

It was not till the 20th of September, Cecile's birthday, that the christening of the new baby could take place. The sponsors were Frau von Kroecher, Cecile, Uncle Briest, the

poet Gleim, and a cousin, Busso von Alvensleben: so the names stand in the baptismal certificate of my grandmother—for she was that baby. She received the names Sophie, Elizabeth, Philippine, Cecile, and married on June 11, 1812, my grandfather, Friedrich von Lüderitz, of Schönberg and Herzfelde.

Gleim, who came over from Halberstadt for the christening, dedicated two poems to Cecile, one praising her devotion as sick-nurse, the other bringing birthday greetings.

September 28, 1794.

It is long since I took any notice of you, my faithful little book! Not but what I have sorely missed any daily communings with you, for many are the landmarks in my young life and my wedded happiness that are set down in your pages. And now I have to confide to you the sweetest, the most wonderful event in a woman's life—that I am the mother of a dear little daughter. Mother! What a world of new impressions, duties, and delights that one little word opens up! And there she lies beside me—a tiny enigma, and her darling blue eyes gaze at me with a question. "Who are *you*, and where have I come from?" they seem to ask.

What happiness lies for me in the thought that my Werner and I are now one in this dear infant! Oh my beloved, how blessed are we in our mutual love! Well I know it was my husband's secret hope that God would be pleased to grant us a son, but I could detect no faintest trace of disappointment when it proved otherwise, and in his great joy at my safe delivery he thanked me on his knees for this divine pledge of our love. I am filled with a deep sense of the dignity of my new maternal estate. I seem to myself quite a grave and

reverend person! Oh Heavenly Father, grant me Thy grace, that I may wisely fulfil my new duties, so that my child may in time grow up to be a good and useful woman.

For long wretched weeks I lay upon a bed of sickness, at times so ill and weak that I thought my poor flame of life must flicker to its end. But God was good to me and let me stay with my babe and my Werner. Oh, how would it have been had I been called away into the Unknown Land and had to bid farewell to all my new-found joys? But that I did finally recover I owe, after God, entirely to the unremitting care of my dear Cecile. Oh thou dear and faithful one, what didst thou not do for me during all those weary days! I had no mother to be at my side in the hour of trial and danger; in Cecile I found friend and nurse and mother in one. Amply hast thou repaid all I may have done for thee!

And not only has Cecile nursed me back to life, she herself has become another creature through her cares for me. It has diverted her thoughts from her own troubles, and she seems to me to have well-nigh regained her health and spirits. The sweet eyes look out more cheerily upon the world, her whole nature has become brighter and more self-reliant, and a smile often plays round her wistful lips now. The soothing peace of country life, the quiet round of household duties can achieve wonders. May they be thrice blessed to my Cecile!

A day or two ago, she came to me with a special request which, at first, I hardly knew how to answer. It seems that the little *intriguante* had taken advantage of my illness to make a business arrangement with Werner. She explained to him how impossible it would be for her to remain with us—perhaps for years—as our guest, and on Werner refusing to entertain her proposal she threatened to leave us. Thereupon, without

consulting me, they arranged between themselves that she should pay a certain sum for board and lodging, Cecile handing over, at the same time, a small capital invested in French *rentes* for my husband to manage. The papers connected with it were in the chest sent by Madame Gervais and had been a legacy to Cecile from her Aunt Choiseul. And with this *fait accompli* she now comes to me and asks my consent to the bargain!

At first I was quite indignant at the arrangement, but I saw afterwards that she was right; indeed, under similar circumstances, I think I should have done the same.

This business settled to her satisfaction, Cecile proposed to show me something, and fetched from her room a great leather case. When, at her request, I opened it, I was dazzled by a blaze of pearls and diamonds. The set consisted of a necklace, a diadem, a brooch, and two bracelets formerly belonging to her Aunt Choiseul. And now she wished me to advise her as to how she might best convert them into money. I was struck dumb by the splendour of these jewels. The great diamonds flashed in a thousand colours—such superb gems, such exquisite milk-white pearls I had never beheld. Not that that is saying much, for with the exception of my mother's little diamond brooch and Werner's beautiful bracelet I possess no jewellery.

It seems a terrible pity to part with all this splendour, but as Cecile is anxious to increase her small capital with the proceeds of the sale, there is no use wasting regrets over it. We decided therefore that as soon as I am well enough Werner will take us to Berlin and offer the jewels to the Court jeweller Harnisch.

It was on this occasion that Cecile, for the first time,

touched upon the past. She spoke of her family estates Mont Courtot and Retracet in the Vendée, and also of her mother's splendid jewels, which she was sure had been stolen or destroyed at the burning of the Castle of Mont Courtot.

I have made up my mind never to question Cecile again as to her past. She will open up the subject herself, all in good time. But this whole episode shows an immense advance; her dear heart and spirits seem to grow lighter every day. But enough for the present,—for Phillinchen is crying for me."

The trip to Berlin had to be put off, however, for Cousin Vollrath Rauchhaupt meanwhile paid them a visit.

The gallant colonel and his regiment were still with the so-called "Prussian-Saxon Army" on the Rhine under the command of General von Möllendorf.

The energies of this army were devoted to a few insignificant skirmishes with outposts, in fact it was the old story—there was no unity of purpose among the leaders and consequently no coherence between the various detachments of the army. Each general fought for his own hand, and nobody was the gainer. The men of the old régime, to whom Möllendorf also belonged, could not forget the Frederician methods of war, and found, to their dismay, that the elaborate combinations they drew up on paper were utterly antiquated and quite useless against the tactics of the young and brilliant French generals. Thus when Möllendorf received news of the retreat of the Army of the Moselle under Jourdan, instead of advancing upon the Sambre and so joining forces with his allies, he continued his own little separate war and advanced upon the Saar.

Here, on the 23d of April, in accordance with a most in-

tricate plan of his, depending absolutely on the various converging columns completing their march in a given time, he attacked the enemy and forced him from his position in Kaiserslautern. This small success was, however, without importance for the campaign in general, and, considering that Möllendorf actually returned to his former position in Rehbach, the whole affair might just as well never have happened, and was certainly not worth the expenditure of blood. In July, however, the French advanced once more and renewed the attack. There was fighting for a few days with varying success. Then suddenly—whether on his own initiative or in obedience to orders has never been made clear—General von Möllendorf concluded a three months' truce with General Jourdan, while the rest of the Allies continued the campaign.

Colonel Rauchhaupt took advantage of this to go home on leave, and expressed his desire to pay a visit to his relations in Kalbe.

His letter announcing his intention is among my great-grandmother's papers.

REHBACH, June 25, 1794.

Hearty thanks, my dear, good Werner, for your kind and sympathetic letter. True sympathy is ever a draught—if not of healing, at least of sweetest refreshment to the vanquished, especially if offered by so kind a hand as yours. And verily I have need of some such cordial, for our position is abominable, and I doubt if it is likely to change for the better. I can endure it no longer, and hasten to inform you that I intend coming home.

To-day a slight advance against the enemy, to-morrow precisely the same amount of retreat; one day one order, the

next a counterorder, so it goes on here without a break. If, by chance, we do manage to beat these Sansculottes a little and flatter ourselves they may be driven back to their den in Paris, the next minute it is "Halt!" and then a Council of War is called. Well, you must have had ample experience of it all. You know the way these gentlemen put their heads together and get out the maps and ancient war reports and handbooks and demonstrate conclusively therefrom that now is the exact and fitting moment at which to act on the defensive. The French meanwhile have a fine time of it, can rest from their late fatigues and presently, being much refreshed, renew the attack upon us, while we—retreat as usual. I tell you, the whole affair is getting beyond a joke.

And so it has gone on for months. Oh Spirit of Fridericus le Grand, descend and fall into the midst of this *crapule* like a thunderbolt! What can you expect? My blood boils at the mere recollection of that Bischofswerder. At the beginning of the campaign he demonstrated clearly to General von Massenbach that he would do well not to buy many horses. The farce, he said, would not last long, the army of French attorneys was being well beaten in the Netherlands, and in two months at latest we should be back home again. —Just so, Monsieur Bischofswerder! Despite all the brave fighting of our men it is we who have been beaten through the disagreements and *bêtises* of our generals.

Eheu fugaces, I turn my back upon the Army!

But I have a great longing to see you dear people again, and if you will permit me, I will pay you a visit—not out of mere curiosity to see how you look as a Father, my dear Werner, but to offer you in person my heartiest good wishes. But how is this? A girl? I thought it was to have been a

boy? However, the looking forward to having one is not half bad either.

And how fares it with the *aimable mademoiselle?* You know, Werner, it is not nice of you to have left me so long without news of her. All I heard was that she had arrived safely and almost immediately afterwards fallen seriously ill. I shall have to teach you manners. Let me tell you that I am very much interested in that beautiful and forlorn young lady and pitied her most deeply. I believe you kept silence just to intrigue me. If you can have me at present, please send me a few words to that effect, and reassure me, at the same time, about the lady.—And now farewell. I kiss the hands of the ladies.—You cannot think how delighted I am at the prospect of even a short respite from the insupportable conditions here! I am like a slave escaping over the frontier. Farewell and keep a place in your regard for your affectionate

VOLLRATH.

My great-grandfather must have answered this letter immediately and in the affirmative, for, by Annaliebe's diary, the Colonel arrived in Kalbe on August 20th. In the interval, however, she and the Baroness paid a short visit to Frau von Bismarck in Schönhausen, where they also met her nephew, young Ensign Karl, and had been much amused at the overwhelming impression Cecile evidently made upon the youth. He simply sat and stared at her open-mouthed, incapable of addressing a remark to her. As to Annaliebe's impression of Cousin Vollrath, it is apparent from the following entry in the diary that with his frankness and unaffected simplicity he pleased her greatly.

August 30, 1794.

Cousin Vollrath arrived here last Thursday. I confess that I was quite startled when I first caught sight of his huge form beside Werner as they alighted from the carriage and he stretched out his great hands to me. He overtops my Werner by nearly a head, and he is by no means short. What a thorough Teuton he is with his thick blond hair—so like my Westphalian cousins, rough and ready and withal so trusty and warm-hearted. He was at home with me at once, calling me "thou" from the first, and I had no difficulty in falling in with his affectionate brotherly tone. Cecile had come down with me to welcome the gentlemen, and now she and Vollrath were face to face once more. What a look of radiant happiness lit up his face at sight of her! His blue eyes positively beamed, and the giant bent low over Cecile's dear little hands which she laid so smilingly in his. The big man looked almost shy while my friend thanked him over and over again for his kindness to her and called him her preserver. I had to lay my hand upon her mouth to stop the flood of fond and beautiful things she said about us and our dear home. She could not find words to express how happy she was with us. But Cousin Vollrath listened to her words with such an ecstatic, almost adoring expression in his eyes, that I begin to fear for our poor cousin's heart.

A week later.

Vollrath is in truth an honest, upright, true-hearted man. I have learned to know him as such in these few days. How I could have wished my Cecile such a strong arm to lean upon in the future! But I fear, I fear that will never be. Cecile cannot *forget*, and will ever remain true to the lover who gave his life for her. I cannot help thinking at times that she is

dimly conscious of Vollrath's feeling for her—it is plain enough, to be sure—and seems to shrink as from some danger and keep him off by a certain coldness of manner. But then, no doubt, the thought comes over her how much she is indebted to him. In short, she has often during the last few days given me an impression of hesitancy, almost of vacillation, which I am quite unused to in her. I am curious to see how it will end. What I think is that Vollrath has come *too soon*. It is scarcely a year since all these terrible things happened to the sweet soul. She cannot even speak of them yet to me, her dearest friend, and he expects her to listen already to another wooing! No, my poor Vollrath, your hopes will be dashed to the ground; of that I am perfectly sure.

Shall I get Werner to give him a word of warning? No, I had better not. Any interference in such matters is always a mistake. I must let things take their chance.

The kind-hearted writer of the foregoing lines was not mistaken in her observations. Cecile's charm of person and character, and the certainly affectionate regard she entertained for her benefactor, may well have awakened a strong feeling for her in his heart or have intensified what already existed. For Cecile seems to have made a profound impression on him even in Roermonde. But, as we all know, when love attacks a man in later life it is, as a rule, a very violent business. Then, too, the Colonel—as my mother, who remembered her great-uncle well, used often to tell us—had been in his youth a pronounced woman-hater. And now, over the man of nearly fifty there swept this mighty wave of love, which so filled his heart that he could not conceive the possibility of its not being returned. And so it came presently, as Annaliebe had feared,

to a declaration, of which my great-grandmother's diary contains the following account:

September 10, 1794.

And so, my poor dear Cousin, it has happened as I feared in my heart that it would! Oh, that I could have warned you in time!

My Cecile and I were together to-day in my room, each occupied with a piece of needlework. It was a lovely autumn day, the whole sky was full of sunshine and the little feathered songsters kept up an incessant twittering in the great linden trees in front of the house. My baby lay asleep in her cradle in the adjoining bedroom, the door of which was ajar. Presently I heard the sweet, low, tremulous little cry I love so well —the sign that my darling was hungry. I hastened to her, and leaving the door open between the rooms, seated myself near the window with Phillinchen at my breast.

Presently I heard the door of the next room open and some one come in, and recognised the heavy footsteps of Cousin Vollrath. I could not very well rise to shut the door, and was therefore perforce obliged to listen to the following conversation: "Oh, Mademoiselle Cecile, for once I find you alone," said he in tones of joyful surprise. "*Bon jour, monsieur le colonel, avez-vous bien dormi?* Were you out already?" asked my friend gaily. "Yes, I was out with Werner.—But now, dearest lady, I find you alone, I can no longer restrain the confession that has long been on my lips. You have so captivated me by the beauty and charm both of your person and your spirit, that you have become and will ever remain the object of my dearest desires. No—I must speak, even though my heart

tells me I may thereby, to my unspeakable and never-ending regret, lose you for ever. Oh, let me tell you how much—"

I heard Cecile rise from her chair as he spoke. "Oh, my dear Colonel," she said in a tone of deep distress, "I beg you to spare me—"

But Vollrath broke in excitedly: "No, dearest girl, the Judge, the Lawgiver, the God I worship in my heart, whom I will not disown and whose mandate I must obey, bids me tell you that I love you, that I honour you above all else in the world!"

"Oh, Monsieur le Colonel, in pity stop," entreated Cecile, her words broken by sobs, "cease to torture me thus."

But Vollrath seemed no longer able to control the flood of his emotion. The words burst from his lips like a torrent. "I know that I have few claims upon a woman's love; I am neither young nor handsome, have no great fortune, and am very considerably your senior; but he who does not attempt to gloss over his failings may surely be permitted to say a word in his own favour. To the woman who can find it in her heart to love me, just as I am, and at whose feet I lay my best, my all, to her I can unhesitatingly promise a happy life at my side. Oh Cecile, give me a ray of hope that I may in time win your love—despair would rend my heart if I thought I must give you up for ever!"

Oh, what fervent, heartfelt words were these—such as I would never have thought our good Cousin capable of. I felt ashamed of being even an involuntary witness of such deep emotion. Now that he paused, I could hear Cecile's bitter weeping and then her low answer broken by sobs. "My dear benefactor," she murmured, "you have had your will and spoken and made me a confession which I can only deplore.

For I feared—oh, how I feared this, and that I should have to wound the man who has done me great kindness—but it can never be. Why could you not be satisfied with our true and faithful friendship? By these words you deprive me of my hardly won peace of mind.—Oh, my dear, my honoured friend, I can never return the great gift of your love: my love, my whole heart belongs alone to my Hector, who gave his precious life for me. As long as I live I can never belong to another—never love another—only him, my Hector!"

"Oh Cecile," said Vollrath, and the pain in his voice smote me to the heart—"Oh Cecile, this Hector is dead and a whole long life lies before you. Believe me, the blessing of the All-Merciful would rest upon our union. Is the whole happiness of my life nothing to you? Must I for ever stand back and give place to this dead man? Oh, I beseech you leave me a shred of hope! Only try me—you shall be so happy with me. I have no desire to praise myself, but this I can say with confidence, that I will be a devoted husband to you and carry you through life in these strong arms of mine. Oh desire of my heart, do not send me away without some little spark of hope—you are all my future, all my life to me!"

"How am I to give you hope, my best of friends?" cried Cecile. "Am I capable of tearing Hector's memory from my heart? No; I have no hope to give you, I must walk the path of life alone! Forgive me that I must wound you so cruelly, but since Hector's death my heart has been sad and empty and will never cease to yearn after him!"

By this time I had laid my little one back in her cradle and stood wringing my hands beside the door, my sympathy roused to the highest pitch. My weeping Cecile's sorrow and

distress, poor Vollrath's grievous pain, touched me to the quick, and yet I dared not go and comfort them.

Silence fell between them after Cecile's last words and only her sobs were audible in the room.

Then came Vollrath's grave sad voice: "Then, Baroness —if that is so—farewell, and forgive an unhappy man who has buoyed himself up with a false hope. Farewell, Mademoiselle!" The door closed behind him.

I flew to my poor darling, who had flung herself into her chair and covered her tear-drenched face with her hands, and gathering her into my arms, let her weep out her grief upon my loving breast. When I gently sought to comfort her— "Oh Annaliebe," she sobbed, "why must I deal such a blow to this beloved friend who holds so high a place in my heart! How gladly would I be able to return his love, seeing, too, what great joy I should thereby occasion to you both, my best and dearest of friends. But I cannot—I cannot. Hector's image never leaves me, day or night!" And the hot tears rushed to her eyes and she clasped her beautiful arms about my neck. "No, I cannot, I cannot," she repeated, sobbing. And I wept with her and soothed and comforted the dear creature as best I could. Presently, when she had grown a little quieter, she said she would keep the past from me no longer. "I must tell you something of my story," she went on. "My life has not been long in years, and yet so full of trouble and adversity. When you, dear sister of my heart, shall have heard all, you will not charge me with ingratitude in what I have done today. You will clearly understand that for me there can be no second love while I live."

I told her then how happy I should be in her confidence, but as her emotions had been very naturally much excited by

Vollrath's wooing, she was to take her time and regain her tranquillity before beginning upon the recital of her experiences.

These were the agitating events of this day. Cousin Vollrath left us this evening in a heartbroken state and without having spoken again to Cecile. I can only close this account with the lament: Poor, poor Vollrath, why could it not have been as you wished? And alas, poor Cecile!

For a while after this, it was very quiet in the old house at Kalbe. During the next few weeks the diary contains one or two entries, according to which Annaliebe was far from satisfied with her friend's state of health. On the 10th of October, for instance, she says: "Cecile sleeps badly and has grown very low-spirited and silent once more. I could find it my heart to be vexed with our poor Vollrath for having upset her again by his premature declaration."

At last, towards the end of October, Cecile seems to have regained her peace of mind, for, recalling her promise to Annaliebe, she begins to relate to her the story of her life, which my great-grandmother has duly set down in her diary.

CHAPTER V.

CECILE'S STORY.

October 28, 1794.

To-day, Cecile began to tell me her story. As even the beginning of the account includes much that is interesting and historically important, I will do my best to set it down as far as I can remember in her own words. Who knows but what at some future time, when I shall long have passed away, this record of an eye-witness of the overthrow and upheaval of all existing institutions in France may not be of value.

After dinner to-day we went to my room, drew up our chairs before the cheerfully crackling fire, and Cecile began:

"As you know, dear Annaliebe, I was born on the 20th of September, 1763. My parents were living then at the Château de Mont Courtot, in the neighbourhood of Poitiers, and there I passed the first years of my childhood. My father had been an officer of the Garde Mousquetaires in Paris, where he met my mother, Anne de Pralins, at that time a Maid of Honour, and married her. My parents retired to Mont Courtot, my father receiving the title of *Capitaine Honoraire*. There was evidently a very agreeable social circle in the neighbourhood in those days, and my parents were specially intimate with the family of the Vicomte de Trellissak of Château Trellissak, the

next estate to ours. When I was little my most constant playmate was the only son of this family, Hector. He was three years older than I and was, even then, very much attached to me, so that his people often called me laughingly his *petite fiancée*. When I was fourteen I was sent to the Convent of the Sacré Cœur at Fontenay and there received my education; but though I came home at intervals I lost sight of my old playfellow Hector. He entered the regiment of the Queen's Dragoons at Lunéville, and it was years before I saw him again. Later on, as the climate of the Vendée did not seem to suit my rather delicate mother, we settled again in Paris, my father re-entered his old regiment, and in 1781 was advanced to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. I was then presented at Court and made my début in society, and for two years took part in all the festivities arranged by the young Queen Marie Antoinette.

"It was in the year 1783 and I was just twenty, when my dear mother received a letter from the Princess de Lamballe, then at her Château of Génévais in Savoy, begging her to confide me to her care as lady-in-waiting.

"My parents were not sorry for this opportunity of removing me from the turmoil of the great city; for the ferment had already begun in Paris, and the teachings of a Rousseau, a Diderot, a Voltaire, had so stirred up the excitable elements in the people that it frequently came to violent scenes in the open street. My father and mother therefore gladly gave their consent to my occupying this position in the household of the Princess, whom they had known of old and for whom they entertained the highest regard.

"In July of the same year I went to the Princess at Génévais.

"Marie Thérèse Louise of Savoy-Carignan had not long been a widow, having lost her husband, Prince Stanislaus de Bourbon-Penthièvre, after barely fifteen months of wedded life. He was a grandson of that Comte de Toulouse, the son of Louis XIV. and Madame de Montespan, for whom the king had revived the ancient dukedom of Penthièvre.

"The father-in-law of my Princess, Jean Marie de Bourbon, Duc de Penthièvre, was the ultimate heir of all the legitimate children of Louis XIV. and consequently enormously rich, perhaps the wealthiest man of his day in all France.

"He had but two children, Stanislaus and a daughter, Marie Louise de Bourbon, who was married to the Duc d'Orléans, the despicable renegade 'Philippe Egalité.' He led a life of riot and debauchery and, on the outbreak of the Revolution, joined the Jacobin Club, hoping by their assistance to place himself upon the throne of France.

"It is my firm conviction that this unprincipled villain brought about my sweet Princess's death. Of course I have no actual proofs of this, any more than it can be proved that Orléans was the leader of the armed mob who in 1789 broke into Versailles for the avowed purpose of murdering the Queen; but I shall go to my grave saying that he caused his sister-in-law, my beloved mistress, to be murdered by hired assassins in order to possess himself of the entire fortune of his father-in-law. And well may he be credited with such a crime, he whose whole life was one succession of fraud, hypocrisy, and treachery! *

"Forgive this digression, dear Annaliebe, but I cannot

* Through the children of Philippe Egalité, one of whom was afterwards King Louis Philippe, the present Orleans family has come into possession of these immense revenues, reckoned at fourteen million

even think of that wretch—who ruined my life, too—without being overcome with horror and disgust at the world as a whole where such a monster is allowed to live and carry out his fell designs! But I will return to my story.

"Since her young husband's untimely death, the Princess de Lamballe had lived in great retirement at the Château Génévais on the Rhone, and there I joined her in 1783. Oh, Annaliebe, how shall I find words to describe that incomparable, that angelic woman! I was soon devoted heart and soul to the sweet and noble-minded lady, whose unusual culture and exquisite beauty enthralled me, and I looked up to her as to a high ideal. You will agree with me, I am sure; one occasionally meets with instances of such whole-hearted admiration of a young girl for an older woman. I idolized her, and her seventeen years of seniority made no difference to us whatever.

"We lived quite to ourselves at Château Génévais, and many were the happy hours I spent wandering about the beautiful park arm-in-arm with the Princess, who had retained all her youthful beauty and with her *cendré* curls and delicately fair complexion looked years younger than she was.

"Those were indeed days never to be forgotten, in the wonderful sunny South, when we passed most of our time in reading and discussing with one another the higher ideals of life. There was little or no society in the neighbourhood, and the quiet routine of our rural life was only broken by an occasional visit to the Court of Savoy.

"Thus a year went by, and then came a day—the 15th of June—when my Princess resumed her connection with the

francs. The present Duc de Penthièvre is the son of the Prince de Joinville, Pierre Philippe d'Orléans.—*Note by the Editor.*

Royal family in Paris, and so took the first step upon that path which was to lead her to her dreadful doom.

"We were sitting that evening on one of the verandas of the château overlooking the Park; a deep blue, star-gemmed southern sky curved over the landscape like a vast bell. The outline of the great Alpine chain showed dimly through the gathering gloom, and far away on the horizon some snow-capped peak glittered mysteriously under the starlight.

"Below us the Rhone gleamed and sparkled, reflecting the lights in the windows of the little town of Génévais on its banks. Here and there a boat rocked on the rippling waves and the melodious song of the boatman floated up to us, while before us lay the verdant terraces of the park with their shadowy paths and tropical plants.

"We had become silent; the Princess leaned her white arm on the marble balustrade, and her blue eyes gazed dreamily across to the distant mountains behind which the full moon was rising majestically into the heavens.

"Suddenly the blare of a posthorn in the courtyard broke the silence, and shortly afterwards the Princess's *valet de chambre* brought her a large missive sealed with the arms of France. It was a letter from the Queen to her well-beloved Friend and Cousin, my dearest mistress. The title Cousin had its justification in the fact that the Princess was related to the Royal House both through her mother, a Grand-Duchess of Tuscany, and her late husband, a Bourbon. This letter, as well as other documents relating to these events, I have kept by me. Here it is."

With that, Cecile unfastened a large portfolio and took from it an envelope containing the following autograph letter

from the Queen of France, written in a clear, almost manly hand. Cecile permitted me to copy it afterwards. It runs as follows:

"PARIS, le 12 juin 1783.

"*A la Princesse Lamballe:*

"Je ne puis résister au désir de profiter de l'occasion, qui s'offre, pour vous écrire, ma chère Lamballe, quelques lignes. Les circonstances actuelles occupent mon âme trop, pour ne pas être sensible de votre lettre et de votre amitié douce. Vous êtes de ces cœurs, qui ne changent jamais et qui le malheur rend encore plus aimables. Soyez assurée, mon chère cœur, que mon amitié pour vous est inébranlable et que je ne pense changer. Je ne vous dis rien des affaires de la ville, vous savez tout ce qui se passe. Il est impossible de sortir sans être insulté une douzaine de fois. Je reste souvent pendant plusieurs jours à ma chambre et j'y suis seul. Alors il me tarde de vous voir. O mon chère cœur, venez à moi, j'ai besoin de vous; venez à moi et occupez de nouveau votre place chez moi.

"Adieu, mon amie divine, je vous embrasse de tout mon cœur. Ecrivez moi bientôt quand vous viendrez.

"MARIE ANTOINETTE."

[*Translation.*]

"PARIS, June 12, 1783.

"*To the Princess Lamballe:*

"I cannot resist taking advantage of the opportunity which offers for sending you these few lines, my dear Lamballe. The actual circumstances of my life at present weigh

too heavily upon my spirit for me not to be touched by your letter and the expression of your sweet friendship. Yours is one of those hearts which never change and which misfortune only renders more loving and lovable. Rest assured, my dear heart, that my love for you is unwavering, that I have no thought of ever feeling otherwise. I need say nothing of the affairs of the city—you know all that is happening. It is impossible to go outside the doors without being insulted a dozen times. I often remain in my rooms for days at a time, and I am alone. At such times I miss you sadly. Oh, my dear friend, come to me, I have need of you; come and occupy your old place at my side.

"Adieu, my angelic friend, I embrace you with all my heart. Write me soon when you are coming.

"MARIE ANTOINETTE."

"Before her husband's death my Princess had filled the posts of First Lady-in-waiting and Mistress of the Ceremonies to the Queen," Cecile continued, "but had relinquished this on becoming a widow and lived in strict seclusion on her estates. And now she was to return to dreadful Paris! For she was determined from the first moment to follow the Queen's call. Any one who appealed to her heart and her friendship never did so in vain.

"She never paused to weigh the question, but, in spite of my entreaties to the contrary, wrote to the Queen that she would come.

"But none the less I am thankful now to remember that I did try to dissuade my angelic mistress from her purpose and begged her to remain in our peaceful retreat. If she could have foreseen the dire consequences to herself of this

sacrifice to friendship! But I believe that even that knowledge would not have deterred her from carrying out her intentions. And so we migrated to Paris and exchanged our tranquil home for the witches' cauldron of the capital in which every base passion of the populace seethed and flared high, menacing destruction to the very throne itself.

"As you may imagine, my position at Court as lady-in-waiting to the Princess was at first somewhat peculiar, seeing that the Princess must always be near the Queen and, at the same time, refused to part from me. Therefore I presently became, in a way, maid-of-honour to the Queen as well, ranking as the youngest of her ladies.

At that time there were six 'dames de la reine': Mesdemoiselles de Liancourt and d'Estaing, de Noailles, de Laval, and de la Barre and myself. We were under the charge of the Second Lady-in-waiting, Madame de Noailles, and the Duc de Brézé was Master of the Ceremonies. Among the maids-of-honour I soon attached myself most to the amiable and lovely Adelaide de Noailles. We became inseparable and loved one another tenderly.

"And now, *chérie*, in order to give you a faithful picture of those times, I must describe the impression the royal pair—whom I may say I saw daily—made upon me personally. As my duties often kept me for hours in their presence, I had every opportunity of gaining an accurate conception of these two noble victims to a nation's passion.

"I will begin with the Queen, with whom I came most frequently in contact and therefore knew the best.

"Here," proceeded Cecile, taking a lithographed copy of a picture from her portfolio and handing it to me, "is a fairly accurate copy of the painting by Senefelder which represents

her with her children. Yes—that is my beautiful royal mistress. Look at the picture while I tell you about her and you will the better understand my description. On her right stands the Princess Marie Thérèse, on her left the Dauphin Louis Joseph, who died in 1789, and on her lap my poor little pet, the Dauphin Louis, at that time Duc de Normandie, who afterwards came to such a piteous end. This little picture was given to me by Madame de Tourzel, the governess of the royal children.

"Marie Antoinette was tall and slender, and the prevailing style of coiffure, in which her fair, slightly powdered hair was piled up high above her forehead, made her look even taller. Her large, dark blue eyes were wonderfully beautiful, their expression being for the most part languishing and melancholy, though again they could sparkle archly. Her natural temperament indeed was very gay. The slightly aquiline nose, the decidedly large but exquisitely shaped mouth, and the—in her case greatly mitigated—Habsburg chin made her closely resemble her handsome mother Maria Theresa in her youth. The statuesque beauty of her shoulders, arms, and hands, like sculptured marble, was still further enhanced by the whitest skin you can imagine.

"She had been most carefully brought up, and had she not been betrothed so early—she was only 15—her character would have had more time to form itself under her mother's wise direction. She would doubtless then have learned to curb the great vivacity of her imagination which, at the time I speak of, frequently led her into an appearance of frivolity.

"Let me show you the first letter Marie Antoinette—then 15 years of age—wrote to the Dauphin, her fiancé. I do not

know how the Marquis de Stainville, who gave me this copy, came by the original, but he assured me that the copy was an absolutely correct one.

"The letter testifies fully to the simplicity and girlish charm of the youthful Princess. Here it is:

"VIENNE, le 27 mars 1770.

"*Monsieur le Dauphin et cher frère!*

"Je vous remercie du langage bienveillant que vous tenez sur moi. J'en suis profondement touchée et bien honorée et je sens quelles obligeances tant de bonté de votre part m'impose.

"L'exemple et les preceptes de ma mère tendre et glorieuse m'ont élevés à remplir tous mes devoirs et à l'aide du bon Dieu j'espère qu'il me sera possible, employant toutes mes forces, de me montrer digne de ma nouvelle destination. Vous désirez, que mon consentement à votre choix accompagne celui de l'Imperatrice-Reine et il faut, vous dites, que vous me receviez aussi par moi même. Je suis vous répondre, parcequ'elle m'y autorise, que j'ai accepté les ordres de ma mère avec autant de plaisir que de vénération. Vous trouverez en moi une épouse fidèle et dévouée, qui n'aura pas d'autre pensée qu'à vous plaire, de gagner votre affection et de se prouver la fille digne de votre aïeul illustre.

"Avec ces sentiments sincères, je m'apelle, Monsieur le Dauphin et cher frère,

"Votre bien affectionée et devouéc

"MARIE ANTOINETTE."

[*Translation.*]

"VIENNA, March 27, 1770.

"*Monsieur le Dauphin and well-beloved Brother:*

"I thank you for the kind sentiments you express towards me. I am profoundly touched and highly honoured and am sensible of the obligations so much goodness on your part imposes on me.

"By example and precept, my tender and renowned Mother has instructed me in all the duties incumbent upon me, and with the help of God and by exerting my utmost efforts I trust I may be enabled to show myself worthy of the position that lies before me. You desire that my personal consent to your choice should accompany that of the Empress-Queen, so that, as you express it, you may receive my hand also from myself. I can reply, since she authorises me to do so, that I have accepted my Mother's orders with equal pleasure and respect. In me you shall find a faithful and devoted wife who will have no other thought than to please you, to win your regard, and to prove a worthy daughter of your illustrious grandsire.

"With these sincere sentiments, I subscribe myself, Monsieur le Dauphin and well-beloved Brother,

"Your most affectionate and devoted

"MARIE ANTOINETTE."

"The marriage took place on the 16th of May of the same year, and the Dauphine entered France and was immediately plunged into the midst of the extremely difficult conditions which prevailed during the latter part of the reign of Louis XV. My friend Adelaide de Noailles, already a maid-of-

honour in those days, told me that there had been but little affection between the young people at first. Their character and temperament were too dissimilar, and the Dauphin's slow-moving intelligence could not keep pace with the sportive wit and childlike vivacity of his girl-wife. When they came to the throne, however, and after the birth of their first child this was all changed and their union became a most tender one. This I, too, can thoroughly endorse from personal observation.

"Very soon the King permitted his youthful consort a certain amount of participation in the affairs of the government, and then it was that she first set the all-powerful party of the nobility against her.

"With regard to the King, my dear Annaliebe, I can only say that he was one of the best and kindest of men and stood intellectually much higher than is popularly declared. But his mind worked slowly and he had great difficulty in coming to a decision in critical moments. Thus it came about that he soon depended on the Queen to decide for him.

"But at the root of the matter lay the fact that it was not in him to be a King, as we French understand the term. We are essentially a nation that demands a representation full of pomp and glory and splendour, and prides itself on being looked up to by other nations with admiration and wonder. This position it undoubtedly held under the hapless King's two predecessors, Louis XIV., who thoroughly understood how to manage his people, and Louis XV., the Well-Beloved, though both these monarchs tyrannised over and drained the nation at every available point. And now, after these magnificent potentates comes an unpretentious, almost puritanically simple Prince who never offered the people any oppor-

tunity for satisfying their craving for glory and display. What was Paris to do with such a man?

"Only now did they begin to condemn the Monarchy as an effete institution; only now did the teachings of the free-thinkers such as Rousseau and Lafayette, which were to sound the death-knell of the King, begin to take hold on the people. The sins of his fathers were visited upon him.

"And alas, the influence of the fair Queen was always inimical to the King's interests. As an Austrian she had, from the first, been detested by the nation at large; she offended the nobility, and then, when they turned the cold shoulder on her, absorbed herself in the life of amusement which appealed to her; and by her heedless extravagance often gave the people real cause for complaint.

"Of this, however, Marie Antoinette took little notice; light-hearted and volatile, she thought of nothing but an ever-changing round of fresh amusements. She possessed a lively fancy and frequently devised new and preposterous modes, and her expenditure was fabulous. The anger of the people waxed loud as they saw vast sums, destined properly for useful purposes, squandered on the costly pleasures of the Queen.

"It was, unfortunately, not long before her reputation began to suffer, for she cast off all trammels of Court etiquette and assembled round her a group of dubious persons with whom she felt herself quite at ease. My beloved Princess lost no opportunity of warning and admonishing her, but to no purpose; neither she nor any of the more conscientious ladies of the Court had the smallest influence over the Queen. She led her own life unconcernedly at Versailles and the Petit Trianon, and even at the time when we returned to Paris and the waves of the Revolution were already breaking against the

foot of the Throne, she cared not one jot for the opinion of the people.

"There was at that time a trio of persons of more or less doubtful character who had great influence with the Queen and consequently on the government. These were, firstly Monsieur Léonard, the Queen's hairdresser, then her *modiste*, Mademoiselle Bertin, and thirdly a certain elderly person, a Demoiselle Montasin, the wealthy directess of a theatre.

"Now as the vagaries invented by her Majesty and this precious trio usually required the assistance of the stage to put them into shape, *comédiennes* like Contat, Sacuval, and others were presently admitted to the consultations in the Queen's apartments, and the whole clique became in time a real power through whom almost anything at Court could be obtained.

"Unfortunately these actresses led anything but reputable lives. The people declared them *cocottes*, and came ere long to believe that their intercourse with the Queen must inevitably affect her morals. Soon they openly accused her of indiscretion, but I would put my hand in the fire for it that Marie Antoinette, in spite of this intercourse, was ever the purest of women and most faithful of wives. She never did anything to justify such accusations, but she should have avoided even the appearance of evil. In her consciousness of purity and her sovereign contempt for the opinion of the masses she felt herself beyond the range of these paltry calumnies, and yet there lay the cause of her later woes.

"Under these circumstances, we ladies had naturally a very difficult position, for our reputation suffered equally with the Queen's in the popular estimation. They even had the effrontery to lay all manner of scandalous things to the charge

of my spotless Princess; but I can give my solemn word that we were all as innocent of wrong-doing as she, and that no one of us ever offended against her honour.

"It was in 1784, when we had been about a year at Court, that the dreadful affair of the Diamond Necklace occurred; but I had better reserve my account of that till another time, it would lead me too far from the present subject. In this matter also the Queen was absolutely blameless, as I, who in a measure shared in the accusation, have the best reason to know, besides possessing documents which will prove it conclusively to you. But I firmly believe that Philippe d'Orléans had a hand in the odious business, as in everything brought against our beloved Queen.

"This scandal of course was most injurious to the Queen's reputation, and formed another strand of the web that was being woven about the unhappy lady.

"Some years passed, the Revolution crept nearer step by step, the state of the finances grew ever more desperate and the pamphlets against the Queen bolder and more scurrilous in tone. My Princess at last succeeded in opening her Majesty's eyes to the peril that menaced her and her family and to startle her out of her thoughtless indifference. Then, indeed, she saw clearly what she had been blind to before, and from that moment her levity vanished. The death of her eldest son, the Dauphin Louis, who succumbed to measles in the March of 1789, deepened the impression and transformed the light-hearted Queen into a grave and anxious woman who had begun to tremble for the lives of those dear to her and to steel herself for resistance to the foe. Brought face to face with danger, she proved herself a brave and resolute heroine, whose courage and prompt energy might have saved the tot-

tering Monarchy had she been able to inspire her husband with the same qualities.

"One horrible day of that period stands out most vividly before me—the 5th of October, 1789—when the wretch Maillard suddenly appeared before Versailles at the head of a wild band of drunken men and women. At their shouts the Queen, accompanied by her husband and children, stepped out upon the balcony of the palace and showed herself to the people; but scarcely had the mob caught sight of her than the foul-mouthed harpies began to yell: 'Down with the Austrian—strike her dead! Revenge! Revenge! But let the King and the royal children go unharmed!' I can see her now, how with a regal gesture she took the two children, placed them in the King's arms, and led him back into the room. Then, with head held high, she opened the door again and, deaf to our entreaties, returned *alone* to the balcony. So she stood with her arms crossed upon her bosom and gazed down calmly at the seething crowd beneath her feet. Oh, the peerless courage of her attitude, the dauntless gaze of those great blue eyes! Suddenly a deep silence fell upon the mob. Was it the all-conquering beauty of the woman, was it the haughty intrepidity of the Queen that overawed the rabble? Perhaps both. The next moment a loud voice cried, 'Vive la reine!' and a great shout of 'Vive la reine!' went up from the assembled crowd. Ah, then you should have seen the smile of pride and triumph that flashed into the Queen's face! She bent her head slightly as if in acknowledgment, and stepped back into the room. For the moment she had got the upper hand, but, alas, only for the moment.

"The very next morning at five o'clock occurred that monstrous attempt to assassinate the Queen of which I am

perfectly persuaded Philippe d'Orléans was the dastardly instigator. Adelaide de Noailles was in attendance on her Majesty that night and remained in her rooms; we others, deceived by the apparent tranquillity of the people and worn out by the agitating incidents of the day, had retired to rest. We were awakened out of our sleep by the howling of the mob which was already pouring through the corridors of the palace. Seizing what garments we could, we fled to the apartments of the Queen. The tumult grew louder and rapidly approached the wing in which these apartments were situated. The body-guard was hewn down, but I managed at the last moment to lock the door against the furious onslaught. At the same moment a blow from an axe shivered the upper panel of the door into splinters; when, mercifully, the Princess de Lamballe wrenched open a little door into a secret passage leading to the King's apartments. Into this passage we dragged the Queen, and had just time to lock the door before the ravening mob burst through the shattered doorway into the room we had left. We fled to the King and found ourselves in safety, as the National Guard were standing sentry over his apartments.

"How shall I describe to you the horrors that befell in the succeeding days and the terrible journey to Paris, throughout which we were exposed to the vilest insults and only escaped death as by a miracle! These scenes belong to history, and for my part I shall remember every smallest detail as long as I live. Even now I can see as distinctly as then the hideous wolfish faces of the hags who danced screeching round the carriage, clambered on to the steps, and literally clawed the clothes from off our backs. It was as if all hell had been let loose around us.

"In these days, at last, the Queen began to lose faith in her people. Hitherto she had clung to the belief that, though led astray for a time by false teachers, they could not fail eventually to return to their former allegiance; but now she began to tremble for the safety of the King and her family.

"What efforts did she not make, in those days, to avert the impending evil! She endeavoured, through the medium of the Comte de Lamarque, to come to terms with the then all-powerful Mirabeau; she did her utmost to win over the high-souled Lafayette, that passionate advocate of liberty—but all in vain. The stone was set rolling, the Monarchy was rushing to its doom.

"And as, they say, rats leave a sinking ship, so did the nobility in this case. They who in the hour of danger should have formed a bulwark round the throne from which for generations they had derived so much benefit, now basely deserted it and fled for safety into other countries. Where were the representatives of the proudest names—the Princes of Artois and their sons, the Princes of Condé and of Polignac, the Broglio, the Bréteuil, and the rest of them? All on the other side of the Rhine. They abandoned the royal family to its fate and the daily outrages of a maddened and bloodthirsty populace.

"Yet those days, so fraught with horror to my royal master and mistress, stand out in my memory as the brightest of my life, for then it was that the blessed flower of love first blossomed in my heart. Since our terrible departure from Versailles the Court had taken up its residence in the Tuileries, that ancient and long disused palace of the kings. It chanced one day that I crossed the great entrance-hall just as the guard was being changed. The uniform, that of the

blue Dragoons of the Queen, the regiment which had replaced the *Garde du Corps*, was unfamiliar to me, but not so the young officer who led them, for, as I looked more attentively, I recognised him as my old playfellow Hector de Trellissak. No words can say how overjoyed I was to see him, how thankful to know that in these days of trouble and anxiety I now had one friend on whom to lean. I had been feeling very lonely and deserted latterly; for, during all these years, my beloved parents had always been near me, but now for several months my father had been stationed with his regiment in the neighbourhood of Chalons, whither my mother had followed him. This increased the heartiness of my greeting to my childhood's comrade. We held each other's hands and gave free expression to our delight at the unexpected meeting.

"How shall I describe the happiness of the days that followed? Hector managed that we should see each other daily, his service at the Tuileries affording him a ready excuse, and love soon awoke in our hearts. Hector declared his passion, and my happiness was complete.

"But oh, my Hector, how were these sweet hopes fulfilled! Once only, after that, did I see him, and at that meeting he went to his death for me!"

At these words Cecile broke into such a passion of tears that I was quite alarmed and, clasping her to me, begged her to postpone her story till another day.

What stormy experiences my sweet friend has had in her short life compared to me, whose youth passed so calmly and uneventfully! Thus differently does God order the lives of His children!

CHAPTER VI.

CONTINUATION OF CECILE'S STORY.

November 5, 1795.

More than a week passed before Cecile could resume her story, several things happening to prevent her. First of all, we had a three days' visit from Uncle Briest. The painters are in his house and so, fastidious old bachelor that he is, he packed up and came over to us, bringing his old servant Christian with him.

His company was, if anything, more welcome and pleasant than usual, particularly on Cecile's account. She was very low-spirited again after telling me her story, but Briest takes such a delightful tone with her—now of playful banter, now of fatherly affection—that she cannot resist his influence. I do not doubt now that, with continued judicious treatment, Cecile will in time regain her old bright spirits. Nor do I give up hope that I may yet see her heart incline to our good Vollrath.

Then we had dear Aunt Kroecher here, too, and to see her and Uncle Briest together is in itself the greatest treat. The story goes that they were deeply attached to each other in their youth; indeed, Uncle Briest always vows she was his first love. Maybe, but one thing at any rate is certain: she is not his last—the two dear old creatures are in a perpetual state of active warfare. Besides these two we had a visit from my dear Frau

von Bismarck, who invited Cecile to come and stay with her presently.

After they had all gone the household settled down once more to its usual quiet routine, and last evening Cecile suggested that she should take up the thread of her story again. My Werner was permitted to join us this time, and I found that his presence had a most beneficial effect upon the dear girl; she was far calmer and more collected than before, although the scenes she described must of necessity have recalled the most agitating memories.

"I told you," she accordingly resumed, "what a grievous blow was dealt to the royal family by the desertion of almost all the higher nobility. But that was not all, for these same nobles did them great harm even at a distance by levying troops in Austria for an invasion of France. The report being spread from Paris that the Queen was the originator of these hostile machinations, the nation rose against her as one man. Thus some months passed, and presently the royal family made their abortive attempt to escape from France. The King, alas, was recognised at St. Menéhould and the whole party brought back to Paris. We ladies were not of the party, their Majesties having taken no suite with them in order to avoid remark.

"Seeing clearly at last that all her efforts to bring about a change in popular opinion were fruitless, the Queen now turned to the Princes of foreign states—her brothers and cousins—for help. The Princess de Lamballe was her first emissary, and was sent to England to persuade King George to make an invasion by sea. Marie Antoinette divulged to the Princess, at the same time, her determination to escape by

some means or other from the horrors of Paris. She said she hoped soon to meet us again in England.

"And so, after a touchingly affectionate farewell from the Queen, we set out on September 12, 1791. It was doubly hard for me to leave my Hector and my dear parents behind in all that trouble and anxiety. A dark foreboding lay upon my heart.—My beloved parents I never saw again, and my lover? Oh, only for one short moment of bliss . . .

"We arrived safely in London after a stormy passage, but the Princess soon perceived that her mission was a hopeless one. The Queen and her daughters certainly received us most graciously and promised everything in their power, but their influence with the government was extremely slight.

"My poor Princess returned to me one day bathed in tears, declaring with sobs that she had now given up all hope. She had had an audience with the Lord Chancellor Pitt,—who from the first had shown himself unwilling to render any assistance to France,—and he had not scrupled to tell her in cavalier manner that the English Government had no inclination to act as catspaw for France; our King must extricate himself as best he could from these difficulties for which, after all, he had only himself to blame.

"Nevertheless, though our efforts were in vain and we were sadly obliged to confess that ideal motives were powerless to touch this nation of shopkeepers, Queen Marie Antoinette insisted upon our remaining in England.

"Many letters, of course, passed between me and my lover during those weeks. In each one he wrote how thankful he was to have me safe out of the country. One of his first letters, however, contained the disagreeable news that he was without an appointment, his regiment under Prince Lambesc having

basely deserted to the people during a street riot. Both the commander and the officers had barely escaped with their lives. He wrote besides of his great longing to see me again, then of the daily recurring riots in the streets of Paris, and that Heaven alone knew how it was going to end.

"At last, being quite hopeless of achieving anything in England, the Princess wrote in July 1792, begging that she might return to the Queen and share her trials with her. In answer she received the following letter which I have preserved with the rest:

"PARIS, 10 aout 1792.

"*A la Princess Lamballe!*

"Je suis heureuse, ma chère Lamballe, de vous savoir en sûreté dans l'état affreux de nos affaires. *Ne retournez pas.* Je sais bien que votre cœur est fidèle, *mais je ne veux* pas que vous reveniez. J'apporte du malheur à vous tous. Il est en effet nécessaire pour mon repos, que mes amis ne se compromettent, ce serait donc les ruiner sans nous être utile. N'ajoutez pas encore à mes inquietudes personelles l'inquiétude pour ceux que j'aime. Les frères du roi sont malheureusement entourés de personnes ambitieuses et étourdies, qui ne pourront que nous ruiner après être ruinées elles-mêmes, car ils ne veulent entendre ceux qui possèdent notre confiance et qu'est le plus triste en ce moment, ce sont les émigrants armés. Je vous avoue, que malgré tout mon courage, je serais heureuse de succomber si je n'avais pas mes pauvres enfants et mon époux, qui conserve dans toutes ces affaires une sérenité inouïe. Autour de nous il n'y a rien que des tromperies, perfidies et mensonges; je vois approcher une dissolution complète de la France. Je pleurs ma famille et

non pas moi-même. La ville. est perpétuellement pleine de vagabonds et pourtant le bon peuple nous rend justice, mais il se tait, abaisse le tête et n'a aucun moyen de se proteger. Les scélérats sont devenus forts par cette faiblesse. Oh, qu'on s'apperçût combien nous aimons le peuple, on rougirait des souffrances que nous avons éprouvées; mais il ne sera pas possible de tirer le moindre avantage de ces bons sentiments. El comme vous écrivez il n'y a par là mon plus du secours pour nous. Que le bon dieu nous sois propice!

"Donc, *vous resterez là.* Adieu, bon cœur, et aimez-moi comme je vous aime.

"MARIE ANTOINETTE."

[*Translation.*]

"PARIS, August 10, 1792.

"*To the Princess de Lamballe:*

"I am happy, my dear Lamballe, in view of the terrible state of affairs here, to know that you are in safety. *Do not return.* Well I know your true and faithful heart, but I *do not wish* that you should return. I bring misfortune upon you all. It is indeed essential to my peace of mind that our friends should not compromise themselves, thereby bringing about their own ruin and benefiting us not at all. Do not add to my personal griefs solicitude for the fate of those I love. The brothers of the King unfortunately are surrounded by ambitious and foolish persons who will inevitably ruin us after having compassed their own destruction; they will not listen to those who possess our confidence, and there is nothing sadder to my mind at the present moment than these armed *emigrés.* I declare to you that, despite all my courage, I should rejoice to succumb were it not for my poor children and my husband, who, through all these trials, preserves a

most amazing serenity. Nothing but treachery, knavishness, and lying prevails on every hand, and I see the complete dissolution of France in the near future. My grief is for my family, not for myself. The city is perpetually overrun by rogues and vagabonds, and though our good citizens are not unjust to us in their hearts, they dare not give voice to their loyalty, being helpless even to defend themselves. The wicked have grown strong through that weakness. Oh, if the people could but realise how we love them, they would blush to think of the sufferings we have endured. But all our good sentiments avail us nothing, and you write that there is no hope of succour from that quarter either!—God help us!

"Once more, then, *remain where you are.* Farewell, dear heart, and love me as I love you.

"MARIE ANTOINETTE."

I was deeply touched by this letter and wrote it down, the better to remember it. Surely it is enough to bring tears to the eyes to read how, in the midst of her own severe trials, the royal sufferer takes such thought for the welfare of beloved friends then far away from her!

After we had discoursed a little on this subject, Cecile resumed her story.

"As it was the Queen's wish, therefore, we remained in England under the hospitable roof of Lady S——, but all our thoughts were in Paris with our dear ones whom we knew to be in danger. The Princess was indefatigable in her endeavours to further the cause of the Royal family, but the Queen of England merely put her off with empty promises and nothing was done.

"Thus a year passed and the next one brought us fresh alarms. At the beginning of August came the terrible news of the storming of the Tuileries and that the Royal family had fled for protection to the Constituants. After that the dreadful tidings came thick and fast. A fortnight later my nurse Gervais sent me the woeful news of the guillotining of my beloved father, who had suffered death with ten of his companions in arms. Next she wrote to inform me of the serious illness of my dear mother. My poor heart was rent with agony. I had left my father in the full vigour of his manly health and strength, and here he had been butchered by these assassins—he, so noble a man, so ardent a patriot, who had so often shed his blood for his country! And now my mother was sick unto death and I far away in a foreign land, unable to go to her, to nurse and comfort her!—Oh, it nearly drove me mad.

"On the 18th of August the Princess received the following brief lines from our royal mistress:

"PARIS, 14 aout 17—.

"*Chère Lamballe!* Venez à moi tout à l'heure. Je me trouve dans les plus grand danger.

"MARIE ANTOINETTE."

[*Translation.*]

"*Dear Lamballe:* Come to me at once. I am in the greatest danger.

"MARIE ANTOINETTE."

"You will observe, Annaliebe," said Cecile as she handed me the document, "that the few words are written in a

trembling hand, quite unlike the usual firm writing of the Queen. But how should we have stayed to notice that at such a time? The beloved name of the Queen stood beneath it, she was in danger—she called, what more was necessary?

"We started that same day for Cherbourg with our three serving-women and two men. On arriving there it suddenly occurred to me—I do not know to this day what put it in my head—that it might be dangerous to take one of my *porte-manteaux* containing my jewels, my private documents, in fact all I possessed of value, with me to Paris. I determined therefore to entrust it to my old nurse, and one of the Princess's servants, faithful old Hippolite, was despatched by a different route to Paris with injunctions to place this piece of baggage in the hands of my good Gervais in the Rue de Ricot.

"These orders were duly carried out, and thus am I now in possession of my modest fortune, while so many of my fellow exiles have found themselves reduced to poverty and want.

"We reached Paris on the 25th of August, and I cannot convey to you the painful impression the once gay and laughing city made upon me after this absence. A drunken, half-demented rabble poured, howling and singing ribald songs, through the streets; the guillotine in the Place de la Concorde daily claimed hundreds of victims, and a sickening reek of blood hung over the whole city. The Royal family were prisoners in the Temple.

"I hastened to my mother's lodging in the Rue du Bac, to find my dear one in her coffin. My nurse met me in floods of tears with the harrowing intelligence that she had succumbed three days ago to heart disease. I watched the night through in bitter grief and weeping beside her body.

"Next morning the Princess came and carried me away.

She had passed a night of horror and despair with the Duchess de Liancourt and was now half distraught with terror, having with the utmost difficulty escaped from a gang of infuriated ruffians who pursued her through several streets. She implored me to join her in seeking refuge with the Queen in the Temple; prison walls offered better security than this mad whirlpool of a city, where bands of ravening monsters hunted down every decently dressed person they caught sight of. I was in a no less desperate plight than she, and I believe I should have gone quite mad had I stayed any longer in my mother's house. Troop after troop of these horrible people passed through the street, breaking into the houses and searching the rooms for fresh victims to their unbridled passions.

"So we fled to the Temple and entreated the Commandant Floquet, a man with a debauched and brutal face, to allow us to share the captivity of the Queen. On hearing our names, he laughed cynically: 'Ah, the *citoyennes* come of their own accord; so much the better, that saves us the trouble,' and he conducted us to the Queen. Marie Antoinette received us with a cry of horrified amazement. 'You, Lamballe! How do *you* come here? Did I not forbid you to leave England, and yet you have returned? Must I drag you with me in my downfall, my poor friend!'

"'But we are here at your Majesty's own urgent request,' I murmured.

"'What!' she cried, 'my own request? But I adjured you both to remain in England!'

"'*Then, Philippe of Orléans, this is your handiwork!*' I said to myself.

"We were permitted to remain with our Royal mistress

till the evening, and she told us the story of her martyrdom during the months we had been absent. Oh, what nameless suffering had been hers! Her face indeed bore witness to it. Where was all her dazzling beauty fled? Grief and loss of freedom had destroyed it. Deep lines furrowed the once fair cheeks, sunken and dim were the lustrous eyes, blanched the golden hair; her hands had an incessant tremor and the sweet proud lips twitched convulsively.

"When the evening came, the inhuman wretches, grudging their royal victim even the poor consolation of the presence of a friend, came and dragged us away, declaring that the Temple was already overcrowded and we must go to the prison of La Force.

"Fiends that they were, they literally tore my sobbing Princess from the arms of the Queen so roughly that her Majesty nearly fell. One more kiss, one last fond look, and the two friends parted never to meet again in this life.

"We were then dragged off to La Force, and cast into a dark and noisome cell with a crowd of other unfortunates. For three days only was I allowed to remain in the company of my beloved, my angelic Princess, then we were separated. The number of victims increased so rapidly that this prison, too, became full to o'erflowing.

"On the fourth day after our arrival, the gaoler came with a long list of names—mine among the number—and we learned that thirty of us were to be transferred to another prison —the majority to the Abbaye St. Germain, but I to the Temple, where doubtless the guillotine had by this time made a considerable gap.

"Let me draw a veil over my parting from the friend who for years had been the light of my life. Yet I confidently hoped

for a reunion with her, and this thought upheld me in my sorrow. For how could I imagine that the world contained creatures so base as to compass the death of this saintly being?

"Alas, I was indeed to see that beloved face once more, but under what ghastly circumstances!

"It was the 18th of September. After long and earnest entreaty, I prevailed upon my gaoler to let me have speech of the Queen, to whom I had brought messages of affectionate greeting from the Princess. I was alone with the Royal family in a room on the ground-floor, and I was giving the King an account of our fruitless mission in London. Suddenly from the street came the yells and shouts of the mob, and the words: 'Citoyenne Capet, Citoyenne Capet, *regardez donc!* Come to the window!' were distinct above the rest.

"With her wonted dignity, the Queen approached the window. The next moment she thrust out her clenched hands convulsively, her gaze grew fixed in horror, and with a piercing shriek she fell to the ground in a deep swoon. The King and I sprang to her assistance, and then I too looked out of the window. There I beheld a beloved head, the sweet and bloodless face framed in long fair curls; saw two wide-open glassy blue eyes, which even grim Death had been powerless to rob of their melting expression—the head of my idolised friend stuck upon a pike and borne aloft in the midst of a howling mob of devils!

"At this my senses, too, forsook me and with a wail of horror I sank lifeless to the ground.

"It was not till many hours later that I regained consciousness in the dungeon where I was confined with forty other

prisoners, and found myself in the arms of Clotilde de Mortemar.

"From her I learned the details of the infamous crime which had been perpetrated against my unfortunate Princess.

"The dear saint had been dragged before a tribunal and accused of conspiring with foreign Powers against the nation. On her denying this, they promised her her liberty if she would openly express her detestation of the Monarchy. This she of course indignantly refused to do, whereupon the self-styled Court of Justice resolved to decide the question of her guilt by vote. The result was an even number for and against, and being unable to prove the least misdemeanour against her, they pronounced her acquittal, showing thereby that there were still a few right-minded men on the tribunal. Indeed, this verdict, which even called forth a cry of Bravo! here and there among the on-lookers, is one of the few bright spots in the Reign of Terror.

"The Princess was then led away to be released, but no sooner did she set foot outside the hall in which the trial took place than she was surrounded by a band of masked and armed men who drove off the guard of gendarmes and then despatched her with their sabres. After mutilating the fair corpse in the most frightful manner, the ruffians fixed her head and her faithful heart upon pikes and paraded these ghastly trophies, first before the house of the Duc de Penthièvre, her father-in-law, and then before the windows of the Temple.

"Thus did my idol, my adored mistress, end her saintly life under the daggers of a gang of hired cut-throats. I trust that the wretch whose paid instruments they were is now receiving the just reward of his infamous crimes before the Judgment Seat of God!

"But enough, dear friends, for to-day. These hideous scenes come back to me so vividly when I describe them that my agitation is almost too much for me. I must stop for a while."

CHAPTER VII.

CECILE CONTINUES HER STORY.

November 6, 1794.

On the following evening Cecile declared herself ready to resume her story.

"After hearing from Clotilde Mortemar the account of my beloved friend's appalling death, I became grievously ill. Black night closed in upon my shattered mind, and for long, long weeks brain-fever kept me unconscious of my surroundings.

"Not till the June of the next year, when my King's head had long since fallen under the knife of the guillotine, did I awake to full consciousness and was able to grasp what was going on about me.

"It is indeed a wonder that I did not succumb to my illness, lying as I did all the time in a corner of the great stone dungeon; and I owe my life entirely to the devoted care of my friend Clotilde Mortemar. But how gladly would I have died then!

"The only thing I remember during those days was the news of the Queen's removal to the Conciergerie. The Marquise de Fontanges had witnessed the parting between Marie Antoinette and her ladies, and was never tired of describing the heartrending scene as they lay upon their knees around

their Royal mistress. The Queen kissed each one of them in turn and whispered: 'Farewell, do not forget me.' Then bowing her head she passed from their sight forever.

"Meanwhile I, with many another companion in misery, was doomed to pass long months of captivity in the horrible vaulted dungeon, that had been a cellar of the Temple, in perpetual semi-darkness, only sparely illuminated by a few evil-smelling oil lamps.

"There must, at that time, have been quite fifty persons of all ranks and ages—even a few little children—confined in this damp and mouldy cellar; artists and savants, nobles, ladies of every rank and standing, priests and teachers of the people—every one, in fact, down to the very servants, in any way connected with the Court or the aristocracy, whether of birth or of culture.

"Here we were privileged to sit at the feet of such intellectual giants as Condorcet, Vique d'Azyr, the poets Florian and Boucher, and to listen to such discourses as made us forget that murder and desolation surrounded us on every side.

"There, too, in that grim twilight, the painter François Boucher sketched a portrait of the poet Chenier, who afterwards sent it to his fondly loved wife with the following charming lines:

> "'Objets charmants et doux, ne vous étonnez pas,
> Si quelqu'air de tristesse obscurcit mon visage.
> Lorsqu'un crayon savant dessinait cet image,
> J'attendais l'échafaud et je pensais à vous.'

"How many instances of generosity and noble self-sacrifice did I not witness during those days! Married couples, parents, children had no thought but to console and support

one another; and now and then it would happen that at the call of the executioner a son would answer for a father, a friend for a friend, and go to the scaffold in his stead. But those that remained lived on unconcernedly. Our underground prison seemed almost like a tranquil island round which the breakers foamed and raged. The only thing that came to disturb our even calm was the executioner's hand that would snatch away one or other out of the friendly circle to his death.

"It was like another world down here. Up above, all the qualities that go to adorn life—grace and courtesy, reverence and polished manners—were rigorously tabooed; they had fled for refuge to these dungeons, these ante-chambers to the Halls of Death. Here there were no "citoyens" or "citoyennes," every one received his proper title; it was Monsieur le Marquis or le Vicomte, Monsieur le Professeur or le Conseiller, just as if we had been at St. Cloud, or in the reception-rooms of the Palace of Versailles.

"Good tone demanded that all sign of dread or anxiety should be repressed, and the presence of ladies lent a certain air of gaiety to the scene.

"How well I remember the aged Marquise d'Amblas, a venerable lady of nearly eighty with snow-white hair piled above her forehead, remarking one day: "Ah, mesdames, and you, messieurs, we are all eighty years of age now!" And she laughed a high shrill laugh that echoed eerily from the vaulted roof like a voice from the tombs.

"She had hardly spoken when the great door creaked on its hinges and a half-tipsy gaoler stumbled in. Beckoning with a grimy hand, he called in husky tones: 'Here, Citoyenne Amblas, come along—you're wanted!'

"'Indeed?' replied the Marquise, 'I am quite ready.' She rose from the stone bench where she had been sitting, rearranged the black lace scarf upon her white hair, smoothed out the folds of her long black gown, and with a deep court curtsey to us, said: 'Mesdames, I have the honour to bid you farewell—*à revoir*. Monsieur le Marquis de Varennes, your arm!' With unfaltering step and the proud carriage of a queen the old lady swept to the door which the gaoler held open for her. One more bow to us and she was gone—gone to her death!

"A momentary silence fell upon us after her departure, and then the conversation was resumed as if nothing had happened—a characteristic example of the French capacity for making the best of a matter, however bad.

"Thus, one day, there sat in a corner under a smoking lamp a party consisting of Madame de Branchue, de Chateauneuf, and two gentlemen: the Abbé de Mercier, if I remember rightly, and the Comte de B. They were playing 'Tric-Trac' with a pack of greasy cards, and the Abbé was in the act of dealing when his name was called. He rose with a smile, and turing to the Comte, who was standing behind him, he said: 'Will you have the kindness, Monsieur le Comte, to take my cards *in the mean time?*'

"He bowed and left. This *in the mean time* meant for him eternity—he was guillotined within the hour. I could multiply such instances of dignified composure and contempt of death by the dozen.

"And so the time wore on till the 22d of July. Towards midday some of us were sitting together, listening to the old Duchess de Bazancourt as she discoursed contemptuously of the miserable Dubarry and how she had come over from Eng-

land in the hope of rescuing her fortune and, on being arrested, had behaved in the most despicable manner. She had no idea how to die with propriety, for, on the way to the guillotine, she had shrieked and bewailed herself so unrestrainedly that she very nearly persuaded the mob to effect her release. The Duchess was indignant and a lively conversation ensued, in which each of us brought forward some instance of heroism displayed by various of our friends.

"Suddenly the door opened and our gaoler entered with a long list in his hand and proceeded to call the names of to-day's batch of victims. I had in course of time grown so accustomed to these daily roll-calls that I had ceased to regard them as anything unusual; indeed, I had begun to feel that they had forgotten me altogether, and my poor heart was numbed by the oft-recurring pangs of parting.

"This day's list was an exceptionally long one, and we all listened in breathless silence, save that from one corner came the usual intermittent ejaculations, 'Spades are trumps,' or the like, or a gentle ripple of laughter after a *bon-mot* from one or other of the card-players. In between came the low response of 'Here!' from those whose names were called; among them, on that occasion, the Dukes de Brissac and d'Abacourt, Messieurs de Roucher, de Lafitte, and others, then the ladies Desirée de Lavallade, Eugénie d'Absak, Laure d'Hauteville, and many, many more—then, at the very end, yet one more—*my own*, Cecile de Courtot!

"At the sound an icy hand seemed to grip my heart and shuddering despair fell upon me. I was but twenty-nine: was this the end—must I really die so soon? At the bottom of my heart there had always lain a secret belief that by some unforeseen chance I should yet go free, should escape this

hideous death. And now, after all, my turn had come like all the rest!

"Then came the thought of the dear ones who had gone before me—my beloved parents, my cherished Princess—and the weight of my terror seemed lightened, till suddenly the remembrance of Hector crossed my mind. Oh, God! it meant that I must leave him, my lover, whom, though I had heard no word of him during all these weary months, I still counted among the living; for otherwise his departing spirit, I was convinced, would have given me some sign. He lived and I must die.

"The torture of that thought was more than I could bear; with a bitter cry of 'Hector!' I fell senseless to the ground.

"But all too soon my consciousness returned under the kindly ministrations of my faithful companion in suffering, Clothilde de Mortemar, and I realised the full horror of my situation: in full possession of health and faculties I must go down into death. Oh, can anything in this world be more appalling than to be forced to say to oneself—One short hour hence and my head will be severed from my body! This head with its active brain which can still think and cherish its small hopes and desires will then lie in the blood-stained basket where so many have fallen before it; this beating heart will be stilled on a sudden and for ever. And after that? Will Death be followed by Eternity and a reunion with our loved ones, or do we sink into Nirvana as Rousseau, Helvetius, and the other freethinkers declare?

"Thoughts like these rushed tumultuously through my mind as shuddering I laid my head on Clothilde's breast and, supported by her arm, tottered into the courtyard where the other victims were already assembled, and only awaiting me

to mount the cart—the 'coffin for the living,' as the people called it. Into this we were now dragged and hustled and had to stand closely packed—some thirty of us altogether—under the pitiless rays of the summer sun and most of us bare-headed.

"And so the dolorous journey began.

"A party of gendarmes—chosen apparently from the dregs of the people—surrounded the tumbril, but it was all they could do to protect us with their drawn sabres from the furious and determined onslaughts of the mob, which ran and leapt beside us like fierce tigers, sometimes stretching up a horrible brawny hand to snatch at one or other of us.

"Among them was one woman, a hideous, half-naked, blood-besmeared hag, who seemed to have conceived a special grudge against poor unfortunate me. Whether it was the white silk scarf that covered my shoulders, or that she regarded me as a peculiarly dangerous criminal, I know not, but she threw stones at me and showered the most abusive epithets on me. Finally, she broke through the ring of gendarmes, leapt on to the footboard of the tumbril, and, holding fast to my dress by one gory hand, dealt me a heavy blow in the face with the other and tore my silk scarf from me. Then, with a screech of derisive laughter, she dropped to the ground and disappeared with her booty among the crowd.

"And there was I left standing weeping, with bare neck and shoulders which I vainly strove to cover from the impudent gaze of the crowd with my arms, and God's fair sun shone down serenely upon all these abominations.

"At last, at last, we reached the Abbaye St. Germain and were driven into the courtyard like a herd of cattle. Here, at a filthy table covered with brandy-bottles and tobacco-pipes,

sat the self-constituted tribunal presided over by Maillard—the same ruffian who led the rabble in the attack on Versailles—wearing a tricolour sash and a long sword at his side. This was the bench of magistrates who in the name of Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality was to pronounce judgment upon us!

"The accused were disposed in two long rows in front of the table, and as I was in the back one I was compelled to witness the whole proceedings before it came to my turn. Each name was called, and at last the terrible Maillard called: 'Citoyenne Cecile Courtot, lady-in-waiting to the citoyenne Lamballe!' 'Here,' I stammered in a low voice, and advanced a step. I was still endeavouring to cover my neck with my hands, but immediately two wretches pulled them down and I was left trembling and exposed to the shameless leers and mocking smiles of my abominable judges.

"Maillard now proceeded to interrogate me. 'Have you, Cecile Courtot, ever spoken against the Republic?' 'No,' I faltered. 'Have you circulated aristocratical pamphlets?' I, poor hapless one, was to have circulated pamphlets! I lifted my eyes to my cruel interrogator and answered, 'No—never!' I was beginning to falter out something in self-defence when the monster roared at me: 'Silence—that is contempt of court!'

"Maillard then apparently set a mark of some kind against my name which he showed with a grin to his colleagues, then at a sign from him three of his creatures seized me, bound my hands behind my back and dragged me to a corner of the courtyard, where others of my companions in death were huddled together and where we had to wait till our numbers were complete.

"Now throughout these proceedings I had retained a per-

fectly clear mind. I watched the whole scene—the mere recollection of which after all these years makes my blood run cold—as if it had nothing whatever to do with me; as one follows the course of a tragedy on the stage. No merciful veil of unconsciousness fell over my senses, as happened to several of my companions. I am at a loss to understand where, considering how weak and wretched I was and scarcely recovered from so severe an illness, I got such strength of mind that day.

"Meanwhile it had become afternoon, and presently the bell that erstwhile had called the pious sisters to mass struck three. Our hour had come. We were driven through wide vaulted passages to another entrance where the death-cart again awaited us and we were once more thrust into it. All was now ready for the start, but the two wretched animals harnessed to the overladen tumbril could not move it an inch. Immediately the bloodthirsty mob gathered round, a contingent of hideous viragos seized the spokes of the wheels and pushed the vehicle forward. And so we set forth upon our second pilgrimage of woe, surrounded by a band of drunken furies leaping and yelling, calling us foul names and taunting us with our approaching end, while in front of the tumbril marched the main body of the rabble, howling the Marseillaise and headed by a semi-nude young woman bearing aloft a great blood-red flag.

"I gazed at it all in disgust and amazement. Could this *canaille*—distorted out of all human semblance by the lust of blood—be the same harmlessly gay, light-hearted populace I used to know? From what hidden dens of crime had these monsters come forth who now called themselves the French people?

"A nameless terror took hold upon me and made me

long for the end—for now I was actually on my way to death; only a little span of time separated me from eternity.

"I closed my eyes to shut out the revolting sights around me and absorbed my whole spirit, my every thought, in passionate prayer to God, entreating Him to deal mercifully with me, to let my last agony be short and then receive my unworthy soul to be with Him in heaven.

"This prayer accomplished, I allowed my thoughts to dwell once more entirely with my lover, invoking every fond blessing upon him, and praying that God would guard him and at least permit *him* to remain in life.

"Thus occupied in fervent commune with Heaven, my soul had already cast off its earthly shackles and crossed the threshold of the other world. Suddenly I was recalled to earth by a shrill clamour of voices and the violent stoppage of the tumbril. Opening my eyes, I saw that our way was barred by a hand-cart on which lay a small barrel. The street took a sharp bend and happened at that point to be perpendicularly narrow, so that the cart completely blocked the thoroughfare and was apparently fixed to the ground in some way, for though the people pushed and dragged at it, they failed to move it.

"Scarcely had I realised the nature of the obstruction, when a shot was fired from one of the houses and the next moment there was a terrific explosion—we prisoners were thrown violently against one another, and I, stunned and half senseless, scarcely knew what was happening around me. The earth seemed to yawn before my very eyes and a vast pillar of fire rose into the sky. The houses rocked, shutters were loosened and fell clattering to the ground, and the air was darkened by a thick cloud of smoke and dust, while from a

hundred voices came shrieks of pain or the groans of the dying. It might have been the end of the world.

"The cart and everything in front of it lay in ruins, and I found myself half buried under a heap of struggling, groaning people. Wonderful to relate, though nearly every one in the vicinity had been more or less severely wounded by the explosion, I had remained unhurt, but lying where I did, I was absolutely powerless to move or make any effort to escape, though complete panic had seized upon the people, and every one who was able was fleeing from the scene of the disaster.

"So I lay motionless where I was and resigned to my fate. Suddenly a dear familiar voice struck upon my ear: 'My Cecile, rouse yourself; it is I,' came the whisper. I thought I must be dead and that my lover was welcoming me in heaven.

"'Cecile,' he murmured again, 'my Cecile!' I opened my eyes—over me leaned a blackened face out of which a pair of blue eyes gazed tenderly at me. Oh heavens—those were Hector's dear eyes!

"'Hector,' I stammered faintly, 'can it be you?' Could it be that I was granted the unspeakable blessing of seeing my lover once again and bidding him farewell before I died?

"'Quick, Cecile!' he answered in the same low tones. 'I have come to save you.' Save me? That word brought me back to earth with a thrill of half-incredulous joy, and my head sank upon his breast.

"Only then did Hector perceive that my hands were bound. One cut with his knife and I was free. I wound my arms about his neck, and he dragged me out from under the wounded and set me on my feet. Then, in the midst of all that horror and alarm, he clasped me to his heart and pressed his lips to mine in a long clinging kiss.—Oh God, little did I

think it was to be the last kiss we should ever exchange in this life!

"Hector's next thought was to get clear of the chaos. He was hurrying with me to an open doorway close by, when a gendarme, who had managed to extricate himself from under one of the horses, caught sight of us, and with a cry of 'Halte là! halte là!' rushed at us with drawn sword. At the same moment, another disguised man appeared at Hector's side, to whom my lover cried, as he disengaged my arms from his neck, 'Take her, Tancred; I will cover your retreat!' Then, seizing his friend's heavy bludgeon, he hurled himself on our pursuer. There was a short, fierce struggle; I saw my lover's weapon descend with a crashing blow on the miscreant's head, but simultaneously the gendarme's sabre struck Hector. I saw him fall covered with blood from a frightful gash across his forehead—saw the returning crowd close over him like a wave—saw him trampled under foot—and knew no more: a deep and blessed unconsciousness came to my relief.

"Many weary hours must have passed before I awoke from my swoon and found myself lying on old Nurse Gervais' bed, whither Hector's friend, Tancred d'Aubignac, had succeeded in conveying me. Gervais nursed me tenderly; in a few days I was able to leave my bed, and shortly afterwards managed to escape with d'Aubignac out of that dreadful city disguised as a peasant boy. We made our way—chiefly under cover of night—through France till we got across the frontier to Holland, but during the whole time I seemed to be living in a dream. A dull weight lay upon my spirit, crushing my senses and blunting my memory. My one absorbing thought was to get away from this land of terror—to Germany, if possible, there to find rest and a grave.

"Why to Germany in particular, you will ask. Persistently there ran in my mind a description I had heard from Madame de Staël of the beautiful Luise of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, the betrothed of the Crown Prince Frederick William of Prussia, whom she had met while visiting the Landgravine of Hesse, and who would soon come to live at Potsdam. Somehow this description had taken a great hold on my imagination, and I felt an intense longing to get to Germany. Thus we succeeded in avoiding the French troops stationed in Holland and arrived at last in Roermonde, then occupied by your countrymen.

"How I met Colonel Rauchhaupt in the house of Madame la Saque and through his great kindness was passed on to you, my dear friends,—all this you know.

"Tancred d'Aubignac, having fulfilled his mission and placed me in safety, returned to France and moreover to our part of the country, the Vendée, there to fight and 'wreak vengeance on the Republic for Hector's death.' I never heard of him again. Doubtless he fell, like so many of my compatriots, in the bloody struggles of the Vendéan war.

"There, my dear friends," concluded Cecile, "you have the disastrous story of my life. It might have been so happy, and turned out so sad. *You* indeed have waked me to new life, but you will now understand how impossible it was for me, after such an irreparable loss, to accept the love even of the man to whom I owed such a debt of gratitude. You will not think the less of me, I am sure."

My poor, poor Cecile, dear sweet soul, what griefs have been crowded into your life! And how friendless and forlorn in those days of terrible loss! I asked her if she had no relatives or near friends in France with whom she might have

sought refuge, but she answered No; for with the exception of a boy cousin, Camille de Courtot, she possessed not a single relative of her name.

"My father's brother," she went on to explain, "lost his first wife, Camille's mother, and afterwards married a Dutch lady, a Mademoiselle de Taëts, who, at my uncle's death, settled with Camille in Brussels. I do not know her, but, from all accounts, she has been a good mother to Camille. He must be about eighteen now, and I trust he will one day do honour to our ancient name.

"I had plenty of good friends and acquaintances, of course," she continued, "but the question was where to seek them. My native province, the Vendée, was in open revolt and my friends in Paris scattered to the four winds. The most intimate among them were the Marquise de Montesson and the Duchess Edmée de Brankas, but I had utterly lost sight of both. The Marquise, whose maiden name was Charlotte Beraud de la Haye de Rion, was morganatically married to Duke Louis d'Orléans. As a child I had often visited her at her château of Mont Rose in the Champagne, and later on, too, in Paris, where she lived after her husband's death, and she had been quite like a mother to me. But Edmée stood nearer to me as being more of my own age, and gladly would I have fled to her, but where was she?—I had not the most remote idea. Therefore I set all my hopes on getting away from this land where murder stalked openly in the noonday.

"And see how infinitely better it all turned out for me than I ever dreamed! And to you, my dear ones, I owe it all. You have brought me back to life, have raised my broken spirit which was well-nigh crushed by the terrible ex-

periences I have endured; you have restored my faith in human nature and led me to feel, as I never thought I could again, that life was worth living. Never can I forget your love and kindness—no, not as long as I live!"

Saying which Cecile cast herself sobbing into my arms, and I pressed the dear girl fondly to my heart, feeling that the full knowledge of her dreadful trials and sufferings only made me love her the more.

This has indeed been a memorable, a never-to-be-forgotten day to me!

CHAPTER VIII.

THE YEARS 1795 AND 1796.

THE winter slipped peacefully away for the Alvenslebens and their friend Cecile, and the diary scarcely makes mention of anything but a visit from or to relations or friends. On the other hand, the descriptions of the quiet doings and unruffled happiness of their home life are all the more frequent, and the two ladies were soon like sisters. Little Phillinchen grew apace and was brought up and doubtless spoiled by both ladies—indeed there are not a few sentences in the diary at this period, such as "Cecile is spoiling the child," or "Phillinchen always wants to go to her," which would seem to point to a slight jealousy between them on that tender subject.

In the spring of the following year the long discussed plan of a visit to Berlin for the purpose of disposing of Cecile's jewels was carried out, an invitation from Werner's cousin Philipp von Alvensleben-Erxleben, who occupied a high official position in Berlin, affording a suitable opportunity. At first, apparently, all three were to have gone, but as Anna-liebe nursed her baby herself this plan had to be deferred till a later day. Accordingly, towards the end of February, my great-grandfather set out for Berlin, taking Cecile's jewels with him, and, on his arrival, despatched the following letter to his wife:

BERLIN, March 5, 1795.
Schinkenplatz 11.

I cannot let this first day of my arrival here pass, my dearest heart, without sending you tidings of my journey, though you must surely have felt how my every thought was with you as yours are with me—in heart we are ever together.—But how strange it seems to be without you, now for the first time since we were made one! I miss you at every turn; I find myself constantly deferring to your advice and judgment; in truth, you are for ever with me, though separated by many a weary mile. And I long most impatiently for news of you, which, God willing, I trust may only be good.—I made the journey here in fairly good time, spending the first midday and afternoon at Lüderitz, and only taking the road again early in the evening. Ludolf and Sophie were both at home and send you their love. For the rest, it was not over-enjoyable there. The two disagree perpetually, so that I almost fear it will come to a separation. Sophie will have her own way in everything regardless of her husband's wishes. With her tribe of children (there are eight of them now, or rather nine, counting the nephew Friedrich Wilhelm Philipp) she is on the best of terms; only with Ludolf she cannot get on at all. God grant things may yet improve with them!—I afterwards paid a flying visit to Schönhausen. They were all at home, including the new Herr Lieutenant, the nephew, and all send you affectionate greetings.—Then, by way of Rathenow and Nauen, I arrived here safely yesterday afternoon, and received a most hearty welcome from Cousin Philipp. He declares that he cannot let me go again under a week, as he is determined to show me Berlin and its society thoroughly now that I am once here. But I am not

sure that I can hold out so long before returning to you, my dearest soul.

Philipp occupies a most important—almost, I may say, all-powerful position here. He and Schulenberg-Kehnert are Count Herzberg's, the Prime Minister's, official colleagues, without whom he may not decide anything. Why the decrepit old man is not entirely set aside is difficult to understand. I fancy it is out of consideration for Austria. It would not surprise me if Philipp were one day Minister himself. In any case, he is making a brilliant career.

I went first thing to-day to the Court jeweller Ephraim, 15 Unter den Linden, about the jewels. He said he would first examine the stones carefully and then make an offer. When I asked for a rough estimate of their value, he said five to six thousand thalers—we hardly expected so much, did we? On the other hand, my news regarding Cecile's French *rentes* is not so inspiriting. The banker Levy strongly advises against trying to sell out. He says it is the enormous issue of *Assignats* by the Republic which has so depreciated the value of French scrip, and that there is no knowing what may happen later on. Please tell Cecile this. It is fortunate for her that the sale of the jewels will repair this loss to her. I will invest the sum in good Prussian bonds.

We sat up late last night listening to Philipp's extraordinary stories of the Court and the society of the capital, the most astounding of all being that Madame Pompadour (the Lichtenau, you know) had been created a Countess with the addition of four ancestors on each side of the house! What do you think of that? Imagine, if you please, her father, Monsieur the Trumpet-Major Enke, as a Count thus late in the

day! Isn't it enough to make one laugh, though perhaps tears would be more in place?

They say the King is very ill and that consequently the Rietz will shortly return from Italy, where she was evidently received with almost royal honours. She holds complete sway here just as before.

There are many refugees living both here and at Potsdam. The Marquise de Navaillac, about whom I enquired, is apparently still here. Philipp tells me that these French people have great influence with the Rietz and are therefore much sought after here; he mentioned the following names: Colonel de Dampmartin, Gentleman-in-waiting to Count von der Mark (Frau von Rietz's son); further, the Chevalier Saint-Paterne, nicknamed "chambellan des coulisses." Then there is a Monsieur de Chappuis de la Combay, tutor to the young Count von der Mark, and his sister, Mademoiselle de Chappuis, companion to Frau von Rietz. Philipp mentioned besides the Baroness Denis, Prince Maurice de Broglio, the Abbé d'Andelard, Chevalier Saint-Ygnon, and several more.

Maybe that our Cecile knows some of these names, but they are on the whole a rather dubious set—I do not include the Marquise de Navaillac—attracted here most probably by the Rietz and her following.

BERLIN, March 6, 1795.

I was interrupted in my yesterday's letter to you, dearest, by Philipp, who came to take me to the theatre. I found it very hard to break off in my pleasant task, but it was well worth it, and I only regretted that you were not at my side to enjoy the beauty and entertainment with me. Mara gave a concert in the theatre. I can only say that it was mag-

nificent and would have been finer still had not the orchestra—with whom the capricious *diva* had been on a strained footing from the first—been decidedly out of temper and therefore played very coldly throughout. Nevertheless, the incomparable singer scored a complete triumph. Everybody was lost in delight and amazement at this Ninon of the world of song who, even compared with the most renowned singers of her time, is as a giant among dwarfs. Besides being enraptured by her beautiful voice, I was much interested in the other occupant of our *loge*, a very pleasant-looking lady, whose snow-white hair contrasted strikingly with her dark eyes and still youthful features, and who occupied the seat immediately in front of me. Who do you think it proved to be? Why, no other than the Marquise de Navaillac! You may imagine my pleasurable surprise on hearing the name, and I at once begged Philipp to present me.

We immediately fell into the most friendly conversation, and when I presently mentioned Baroness Cecile the lady was overjoyed. She insisted on my telling her all I knew of Cecile's fate, how long she had been with us—everything. She had long since accounted her dead. In Cecile's interest I then enquired about other personages whom our friend had mentioned as being her intimates. The Duchess Edmée, said the Marquise, had long since returned to Paris and, through the influence of the all-powerful Barras, regained possession of her estates. The Marquise de Montesson seems likewise to have returned, so the Bishop of Clermont, who lives in Gotha, had written. We were so deeply engaged in conversation that even after the close of the concert we remained together for some time in the *foyer*. I gathered all the news I could for Cecile's benefit, and shall have more to tell her when we

meet. The Marquise finally expressed the hope of seeing you and Cecile here before very long and begged me to convey her affectionate greetings to her *compatriote* in the mean time.

And now, dear heart, good night and pleasant dreams to you, my dearest, sweetest wife.

To all Eternity,

Your WERNER.

WERNER'S SECOND LETTER FROM BERLIN.

BERLIN, March 9, 1795.

Let me hasten, my precious Annaliebe, to tell you how more than happy I was to receive your sweet letter. It is a pleasure fraught with pain to assure you ever afresh that the separation from my beloved wife becomes daily more unendurable to me. My business here need not detain me much longer, however, and I shall make all haste back to you. Matters are progressing favourably with respect to Cecile's jewels. The jeweller Harnisch offers 6000 thalers for them. Let me have a little line from you, dearest, by return to say if this arrangement is agreeable to Cecile.

I met a number of our relatives and friends since my first letter to you; fat cousin George of the mounted gendarmes begged to be specially remembered to you.

From all I hear, society, and especially that connected with the Court, is in a sorry state, and I am heartily glad that we are not obliged to live in it. I confess I should never have deemed it possible that morality could be so lightly thought of as is here the case, even in the highest grades of society. How you, sweet soul, would shine among these women! Do you remember Briest once telling us of the prophecy Frederick the Great is said to have made to Count Floym?

"There will be gay doings at Court after my death. My nephew will squander my treasure and let the army deteriorate. Women will have all the power in their hands and the State will go to rack and ruin!"

If the last clause is, I trust, an exaggeration, the rest has certainly come true. I can say to you in confidence that the stories I hear on every hand are positively dreadful! You have no conception what all these women cost. Then the left-hand marriages of the King alone set at naught all moral law. And what shall be said of a pastor who, taking Luther's toleration of the Hessian Frederick's twofold marriages for a precedent, solemnizes such a union! How will it react upon the masses? In truth the state of things is infinitely worse than that which undermined the throne of France. And withal such lauding to the skies, such cringing and accommodation to the Royal fancies! It is quite beyond my comprehension. The Countess Sophie Dönhoff is, to my mind, the best of the lot; not but what it is a crying shame that her illustrious family should, out of pure greed, have given their consent to this *soi-disant* marriage. She, at least, had the courage to tell the King the unvarnished truth for once. You remember Rauchhaupt told us the story, how she wrote to the King at the beginning of the Rhine campaign: "I will have nothing further to do with you, if you so lightly undertake so weighty an enterprise. To start on such a war in a manner befitting your position you should be at the head of at least 300,000 men. With the handful you have, you merely risk your life and jeopardise your honour." Those were her very words—so several people here have told me; indeed, they say that on his return from the war the Countess called her royal spouse a Don Quixote. Imagine the effect

of such words on such a King, who has always been surrounded by lickspittles and fawning sycophants! He repudiated the courageous woman and now she lives in Angermünde, but, it is said, much prefers to be there in retirement to living in greater splendour at Court, where she had to play second fiddle to Madame Rietz.

Philipp gave me these details on our meeting the Dönhoffs' two children in a royal carriage. They have been taken away from the poor mother and brought up under the eye of the Countess Lichtenau in Potsdam. They bear the title of Count and Countess Brandenburg. All these things are surely an outrage on the moral sense of the worthy burgher classes!

Yet out of the very heart of this slough of wickedness the conjugal happiness of the Crown Prince and his lovely consort and the high moral tone of their Court stand forth like an island of purity and honour. I had an excellent opportunity of observing the handsome couple last evening at the theatre, where they gave "Don Giovanni" with Wöllner in the title rôle. I am bound to confess that I did not see much of the opera, my whole attention being concentrated on the beautiful Crown Princess Luise and her husband, who, instead of occupying the Royal box, were in a smaller one near the stage, so that I had a full view of them. Oh, Annaliebe, she is like a denizen of another sphere! With her great blue eyes, the exquisite oval of her face, the perfect grace of her figure, she is a very pearl among women! No wonder the whole world seems enthralled by her. Would that I could paint her for you just as I saw her in all her radiant beauty, her fair white arm leaning upon the velvet cushion of the loge. She wore—and this will interest you two

more particularly—a white muslin gown, with a little posy of violets fastened at her bosom, and a kind of turban of silver-spangled crêpe on her wonderful blonde hair. Round her throat was draped a curious filmy scarf like a veil of delicate white lace. Philipp explained to me that soon after her arrival in Berlin her Royal Highness had suffered from a slight swelling in the neck and took to wearing this scarf in order to hide it. The scar has long since disappeared, but she retained the habit of wearing the scarf and, strange to say, the ladies have adopted it as a settled fashion and all go about now with their neck thus enveloped.

You will see from this, sweetheart, how keen must have been my scrutiny of her beautiful Highness. Nevertheless, I have no desire to see you follow this fashion and so deprive me of the pleasing sight of your fair white neck.

In attendance on the Crown Princess were Frau von Voss, the first Lady-in-waiting, and two maids of honour, Fräulein von Viereck and Fräulein von Moltke; and as Gentleman-in-waiting my old schoolfellow Freiherr Fritz von Schilden. The Crown Prince preserved a very solemn demeanour throughout the evening—as indeed all his tendencies appear to be towards a grave, not to say stern, view of life. Philipp describes him as an upright, simple-minded and conscientious man, and all the arrangements of his household on a most unpretentious scale. What must not the poor Prince and his chaste and noble-minded consort have to suffer when, as often happens, they are compelled by order of the King to attend the soirées of this Madame Pompadour! The woman has actually received the whole Court in her own apartments. It must be a bitter indignity for the Crown Prince to see

his mother and his wife compulsory guests of his father's mistress.

I thought it only right and proper to wait on Frau von Voss as an old and valued friend of my dear mother. So I went there yesterday and was most cordially received. She then invited me to spend the evening and meet a few of her friends—very charming people, as I afterwards found. Among them was a Countess Bassewitz with two very sweet daughters, Agnes and Luise. A more faultless beauty you cannot picture to yourself; not but what I should be almost inclined to award the palm to her elder sister, who, though far inferior to her in beauty, is endued with an irrepressible and irresistible charm. Whether, or to what degree, the two sisters possess those more solid virtues which are of more enduring value in life than the witchery of a lovely exterior, I am not prepared to say. One quality, at least, they have in common, heaven's inestimable gift—patent in their every look and word—of a sunny and kindly disposition, also an inexhaustible fund of good humour and as much intelligence as any woman need have.

I am not exaggerating—even Philipp, who hovers with the same calm impartiality round ancient dames and pretty maids-of-honour; who is held, by those who know him, totally incapable of anything like sentimental enthusiasms, has a touch of it here and received the news that this was the last evening we should have the Flower of the Schlippenbachs (so they call the elder sister) in our midst with a mournful smile.

At my initial visit to Frau von Voss I met the Countess Reventlow, who informed me that she was going with Madame Schulenburg to-morrow evening to the Queen's re-

ception, where doubtless they would suffer terribly from *ennui* as usual—could I not manœuvre so that Philipp and I came on there after our evening with Frau von Voss?

I took the hint and sent in my name forthwith to Madame la Comtesse Schulenburg, first Lady-in-waiting to her Majesty, and, accordingly, have just received an invitation to the reception. I shall therefore drive on there and have a little chat about it afterwards with you.

11.30 P.M.

There, dear heart, I have just returned from Her Majesty's *assembleé* and at once proceed to give you an account of the same. To tell the truth I did not expect much, but in the end it proved more entertaining than I had anticipated. I was presented to the Queen and very graciously received. She was pleased to enquire as to my part in the late war, and also spoke of you in highly gracious terms.

Now, I need not tell you, sweetheart, that anyone who does that wins my heart on the instant. She made allusion to your home in Westphalia and to various other matters which greatly surprised me. Her Majesty, whom I had never seen before, is tall and slender, and, despite her heavy troubles, well-preserved. But there are unmistakable traces of suffering in her gentle face infinitely touching to the feeling heart. Prince Ludwig, the husband of the fascinating Princess of Strelitz, was also there—the Princess herself, to my great regret, was absent on a visit to Darmstadt. Neither were the Crown Prince and Princess present, although they had accepted the invitation.

The company afterwards disposed themselves in a wide circle, an arrangement which, as a rule, is not conducive to agreeable conversation, but it proved better than I expected.

I forget exactly how the subject of France came on the tapis, or who first made mention of the unfortunate Royal family, but presently the Queen began relating some very interesting stories in connection with her brother-in-law, the Czarewitch Paul, when, as the Comte du Nord, he was the guest of the Royal family in Paris, 1789. You both shall hear them from me later on. Then the conversation turned upon events in general in Paris and some one mentioned the Princess de Lamballe; whereupon the Marquise de Navaillac broke in, saying, "On that subject, Your Majesty, Baron Alvensleben is better informed than any of us, for the Baroness de Courtot, *dame d'atour* to the unfortunate Princess, has resided for some time in his house." All eyes were immediately turned upon me, so, at a leading question from the Queen, I was constrained to give an account of Cecile's terrible experiences.

Her Majesty listened with great interest, and was unfeignedly moved at the tale of Cecile's grievous troubles. She expressed her sympathy in feeling terms, and was pleased to intimate her desire to have our dear friend presented to her. Altogether, she showed herself sympathetic and warm-hearted to a degree most unusual with her, Countess Schulenburg affirms.

Supper was taken at separate little tables—a fashion introduced here by a certain Count Matuscka, a Silesian—and chance threw several of us friends together. There were the two Countesses Schlippenbach, Countess Lottum, Countess Schulenburg, and Madame von Saldern, with Albert Schlippenbach, a Herr von Langenn, Masson, Philipp, and myself. Albert Schlippenbach kept us all laughing, and when presently we were joined by the Hereditary Count Stolberg-Stolberg conversation grew very animated and wit and laughter reigned

at our table to a degree not often heard within these sober walls, I should imagine.

On my return here, I found your dear kind letter. Surely, my Annaliebe, we might be held up as exemplary correspondents, our letters follow one another without a pause! Thanks, dear heart, for this fresh evidence of your love. You write that all is well with you at home—that is the best news you could give me. This is my last to you from here. To-morrow I start for home and shall soon hold you in my arms again. Kiss our Phillinchen and convey my best remembrances to your friend.

Always your fondly devoted

WERNER.

For the reader's better understanding, I may here add a few explanatory remarks on certain persons mentioned in the foregoing letters. The little nephew, Friedrich Wilhelm Philipp, whom my great-grandfather saw at Lüderitz, married little Philippine von Alvensleben in 1811 and was my grandfather. His father and his uncle had cast lots for the old family estate of Lüderitz, whereby the latter, Ludolf Daniel, won, my grandfather inheriting two other estates, Herzfelde and Schöneberg.

The Cousin Philipp in Berlin was the Count Alvensleben-Erxleben, subsequently so well known as Minister of State under Frederick William III.

Countess von der Mark, described as "the Lichtenau's" only daughter, married a Count Stolberg-Stolberg, from whom she was afterwards divorced. She then married a Herr von Miakowski, and, after his death, a Monsieur Thierry in Paris.—The son of Fräulein von Voss and Frederick William

II. received the title of Count Ingenheim, and his son married the daughter of this Madame Thierry, so that the present line of Ingenheim—still living at Reisewitz and Silesia—is descended from two children of Frederick William II.

The Princess Friederike of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, mentioned in the letter as the wife of Prince Ludwig of Prussia, married, after his death, Prince Solms-Braunfels, and later on the Duke of Cumberland, afterwards King of Hanover.

There is nothing worthy of special remark in my great-grandmother's diary for the next few months except that Cecile wrote a letter to her friend the Duchess Edmée in Paris.

Then on November 8th Annaliebe's birthday was celebrated with great rejoicing.

On this occasion she writes:

November 9, 1795.

Oh, great and Heavenly Father! I feel that I must fall upon my knees and thank Thee out of a full heart for all the happiness Thou hast vouchsafed to me. What a day of heavenly joys lies behind me! Far, far beyond my deserts have I been blessed! Oh, my Father, how happy hast Thou made Thy child—grant that I too may bring happiness to those I love. Teach Thou me to acknowledge my faults and help me to overcome them! My temper is too quick and hot; do Thou make me gentle and less prone to anger.

My beloved Werner will not admit these faults of mine, but I know well in my heart that I possess them. Make me worthy of the blessings my husband showers upon me!

And what rich gifts have poured in upon me from every side for my birthday! From Werner a lovely blue silk gown

and the exquisite filigree necklace that belonged to his mother. Uncle Briest presented me with a wonderful bureau-forte-piano that looks for all the world like a secretaire, so that nobody guesses its melodious contents. It is just what I want, for the voice of my dear old spinet has grown sadly thin and weak. Cecile's gift pleased me beyond measure. She bestowed upon me one of her most cherished relics, the beautiful piece of embroidery she once worked in company with the Princess de Lamballe, with the initials of the two friends—M. L. and C.—entwined together in a monogram. How sweet of her to have this lovely work made up as a little fire-screen—a thing I had long wished for. I shall always take the greatest care of it.*

Dear old Aunt Kroecher and the good pastors gave me a beautiful vase full of flowers—indeed flowers were everywhere, in pots upon the table and the window-sills, in nosegays and wreaths—the whole air was full of their delicious freshness and perfume. But sweetest of all was my lovely little human blossom, my darling Phillinchen, when yesterday, for the first time, her dewy little lips shaped themselves to say—"My mama."

Oh great and merciful Father, greatly hast Thou blessed me. Continue these blessings to me, is my earnest prayer!

* This fire-screen is in my possession at this moment, the costly embroidery still in excellent preservation. The frame only has had to be renewed. It is one of my most highly prized heirlooms.—*Note by the Editor.*

CHAPTER IX.

THE STORY OF THE QUEEN'S NECKLACE.

THE summer of 1796 passed uneventfully in Kalbe and the notes in the diary are few and far between. It must have been an extraordinarily fruitful year, for my great-grandmother writes of the overflowing abundance of the harvest, and that her husband scarcely knew where to put it all—such a harvest as had not been known within the memory of the oldest inhabitants. Further on she says: "Werner keeps telling me to ask for something in commemoration of the splendid harvest—but what is left for me to wish for? My happiness is complete and sufficient in itself."

The ladies were doubtless left much to their own society while Annaliebe's husband was thus busily employed, and appear to have whiled away their leisure in telling one another stories, for into this period of the diary falls Cecile's promised account of the Scandal of the Diamond Necklace.

September 21, 1796.

It has rained all day. My dearest Werner was busily engaged at the farm since early morning, so after dinner Cecile proposed to while away the afternoon by fulfilling her promise of telling me the story of the Queen's necklace.

Accordingly we established ourselves in my cosy little

room, and Cecile proceeded to relate the story which I shall endeavour to set down as much as possible in her own words.

"It was in 1784, when I had been for about a year with the Princess de Lamballe at the Court of Versailles, that the affair occurred which afterwards proved so damaging to the Queen's reputation, although the unfortunate lady was absolutely blameless in the matter and only learned the truth when it was far too late to combat the intriguers. No one can speak with better authority on the subject than myself, as, unhappily, I was implicated in the judicial enquiry that followed.

"In order that you may the better understand my story I must go back to the year 1770, when Louis René, Prince de Rohan-Guémenée, at that time Prince-Bishop of Strasburg, was sent as ambassador to the Court of Vienna to arrange the preliminaries connected with the betrothal of the Dauphin and the Princess Marie Antoinette.

"Despite his ecclesiastical position the great Church dignitary was a confirmed libertine and many were the stories in circulation of his amours and his reckless extravagance. His mission in Vienna naturally brought him in contact with the young and lovely Archduchess, and the story goes—though I cannot vouch for the truth of it—that he became so violently enamoured of her that, disregarding the object of his embassy, he sought by every means to win her love for himself. So far did his folly and his belief in his own irresistible qualities lead him, that he is reported to have applied to the Pope to be relieved of his ecclesiastical charge and for a dispensation enabling him to marry the Archduchess.

"Be this as it may, he actually did make the young Prin-

cess a violent declaration of love one day, when he was so unlucky as to be surprised by the Empress Maria Theresa; who, they say, hotly indignant at his unwarrantable boldness, heaped him with contumely and insisted on his immediate recall to Paris. It was this rejection which laid the foundation of his hatred against my poor unhappy Queen.

"When Louis XVI. came to the throne Rohan fell into disfavour and was banished to Strasburg, but the good-natured King recalled him in a year or two and even made him Grand Almoner of the kingdom. The Queen, however, never forgave him his former presumption and invariably treated him with marked disdain, wounding the man's inordinate vanity to the quick; till, blinded by the all-absorbing desire to win Her Majesty's regard, the Prince-Bishop allowed himself to become the tool of a band of unscrupulous swindlers.

"There lived at that time in Paris a couple of adventurers, a *ci-devant* gendarme and his sister (though I think the relationship was more than doubtful), who called themselves Valois and claimed to be descended from the ancient royal family of that name. This worthy couple made some show of position, and their house was the favourite resort of those Illuminati who gathered round the so-called Count Cagliostro —otherwise Joseph Balsamo—as their prophet.

"By some means or other, Cardinal Rohan was drawn into this set, with the result that he soon stood on a very intimate footing with the self-styled 'Countess' Lamotte-Valois, whose motive herein was to persuade the Cardinal to introduce her at Court and so obtain acknowledgement of her alleged name and rank. Being himself in bad odour at Court, Rohan was unable to gratify this wish of hers, but

when, taking advantage one day of his tender mood, the Countess persistently returned to the attack, he disclosed to her that he loved the Queen with a consuming passion and would give his life to win her favour. On this avowal the woman seems to have based her shameless intrigue.

"Her first step was to assure the Cardinal that she was on intimate terms with some of the Court ladies, mentioning me —who had never set eyes on her—in particular, and showing herself frequently on the stairs and in the corridors of the Palace at Versailles to give an appearance of truth to the statement.

"It happened that just at that time the Court jewellers Bohemer and Bassange were offering a wonderful diamond necklace for sale. The Queen saw it and very much wished to possess it, but on learning that the price was over two million francs she at once abandoned the idea.

"The Lamotte now set herself to persuading the Cardinal that the Queen was ardently in love with him—so Cagliostro had discovered in *séance* with his familiar spirits—and that her coldness was merely a cloak to hide her all too violent flame. Let him seize this opportunity for breaking down the barrier of coyness, let him lay the famous necklace at his idol's feet—she even engaged to bring about a meeting between him and the Queen on some evening to be decided on later.

"And this brings me to the crowning villainy of this gang of reprobates.

"It was the 14th of July, 1784, and a marvellous summer evening; a well-nigh tropical atmosphere lay over the Park of Versailles and the Petit Trianon, where we had been taking tea in Her Majesty's apartments, and afterwards went out to breathe the freshness under the portico. Besides the Queen

there were the Princess de Lamballe, Mesdemoiselles de Noailles, de Laval, and myself. The stars shone in dazzling brilliance, but in the bosquets and the broad avenues of the Park the shades of evening were already deep.

"Presently the Queen left us in order, as was her frequent custom, to take a little exercise before retiring. She strolled in the direction of one of the avenues, and we ladies remained beneath the portico while Mademoiselle de Laval went to fetch lights; the Queen allowing no lacqueys at the Trianon. We then seated ourselves round a table and chatted about the events of the day.

"Suddenly a shrill scream broke the stillness, and as we started up and ran in the direction from whence it came, the Queen rushed breathless towards us. When she came within the region of the light, we noticed that her beautiful face was ghastly pale and her eyes strangely fixed and glassy. My Princess asked in terrified solicitude if she felt ill, whereupon she replied, in a voice we hardly recognised, that she had just encountered an apparition. 'An apparition?' we cried. 'Yes, I can call it by no other name,' she gasped. 'A figure glided past me, so exactly resembling myself in every particular—even down to the dress I am wearing—that I could not but take it for my wraith (*mon fantôme*). When, startled almost out of my senses, I called to the apparition, it vanished among the trees.'

"Such evidences of terror on the part of our Royal mistress, whom we had always known as the most fearless of beings, alarmed us beyond measure. Snatching up the lights we hastened to the spot she described and thoroughly scoured the whole neighbourhood. Not a sign of anything could we dis-

cover, only Adelaide said she heard a sound as of someone moving through the thicket in the distance.

"The occurrence was long the subject of conversation between us, but it presently faded from our minds, and the Queen herself came at last to believe that she had been the victim of a delusion. We were destined to remember it in the time to come.

"In the course of the subsequent trial, it transpired that the Lamotte had chosen that evening for the consummation of her vile scheme. It seems she had come across an infamous creature called Oliva, a *figurante* at one of the low theatres, who bore a most striking resemblance to the Queen. Having apprised the Cardinal of the promised rendezvous, she dressed this woman in clothes such as the Queen was in the habit of wearing and secreted her in a shrubbery close to the Petit Trianon. Here the Cardinal found her, and never doubting that she was Marie Antoinette, fell at her feet and clasping her knees declared his passion.

"The supposed Queen then graciously raised him, embraced him, and addressing him in endearing terms, expressed her ardent longing to possess the diamond necklace. In the midst of these tender passages, a warning cry came from Madame Lamotte, who was playing sentinel close by. Acting her part to the life, Oliva hurriedly slipped away, promising the Cardinal to meet him again the next evening.

"The Lamotte had now brought the Cardinal to the desired point. He acquired the necklace and handed it over to her to give to Marie Antoinette. But no sooner had the wily person secured her booty than she passed it on to her brother, who incontinently fled with it to England, while she herself

remained with insolent audacity in Paris, where she imagined herself perfectly secure from suspicion.

"In the course of the next six months, however, the jewellers applied in vain to the Cardinal for payment, till at last, driven to bay, he confessed that he had bought it in the Queen's name.

"The King and Queen now heard the whole story from the jewellers, and the indignant King at once ordered the most searching investigation. Thus it was that I too became implicated in the affair, and was brought before the Court as having received the jewels from Madame Lamotte to be given to the Queen. It was terrible! Happily I had no difficulty in establishing my innocence, for on the day mentioned by the vile creature I had not been in Versailles at all, but with my parents in Paris. The charge against me consequently fell to the ground; indeed, the whole nefarious plot presently came to light. The Lamotte was pronounced guilty, publicly scourged and then incarcerated in the Salpetrière.

"Nevertheless, the Cardinal satisfied his base desire for revenge by saying, when he was under examination, that 'he *might possibly* have been deceived in the person of the Queen'; his whole demeanour at the same time being calculated to give both the Tribunal and the public the impression that he was concealing the truth to shield the Queen, and that a liaison actually existed between them. Accordingly he was acquitted —a flagrant miscarriage of justice, for he should, at least, have been punished for *lèse majesté* in thus defaming the Queen. The King banished him, it is true, and had Cagliostro and his precious disciples driven from the kingdom.

"Nevertheless, the people seized upon the various unsavoury details of this trial, which lasted nearly a whole year,

for building up fresh accusations against the Queen. That evening at the Trianon played a part herein, the majority asserting that it was Marie Antoinette herself who then met the Cardinal, and that the story of the double was a mere fiction to divert suspicion from the real culprit. Unfortunately, colour was given to this story from the fact that Oliva was nowhere to be found, her friends having succeeded in getting her out of the country so that she should not be produced to give evidence at the trial.

"This calumny therefore became a fixed idea with the people, and from that time forth all manner of love intrigues were brought against the unfortunate Queen. She was even accused of a liaison with her brother-in-law of Artois, despite the well-known fact that he was most happily married.

"But at the bottom of all these base aspersions, as of the Necklace affair itself, was the vile Philippe d'Orléans—of that the Queen and we ladies were unalterably persuaded. He was intimately associated with Cagliostro and his band, and initiated the entire plot to ruin the Queen's reputation, out of spite for her indignant rejection of his proposals.—I hold that man capable of any crime.

"Here are two letters," continued Cecile, handing them to me, "from Marie Antoinette to her sister Marie-Christine of Sachsen-Teschen, wife of the Stadtholder of the Netherlands, in which the Queen gives her view of the story. They are copies of the originals in the possession of the Marquis de Stainville, who vouches for their accuracy. The complete innocence of the sorely tried Royal lady is unmistakable from both of them.

FIRST LETTER.

"*Chère sœur!*

"L'affaire affreuse du collier forme toujours la conversation publique, tout le monde en parle. Tant que le cardinal cherche à sauver son honneur, il n'y reussira pas; son effronterie et son audace ont rencontrées trop d'obstacles, tant qu'ils sont supportées.

"Votre règne m'assistera j'en suis convaincue, en faisant la recherche de la femme qui a joué ce rôle dans la scène du jardin et s'est refugiée chez vous. Donnez les plus sevères ordres à cet égard, je t'en prie. Le Dauphin joue à mon côté avec ma fille et ils ont se portent en bonne santé; maintenant ils ont une quérelle et me demandent, que je sois juge entre eux—je ne quitterai pas donc les tribunaux!

"Adieu, chère sœur, je t'embrasse,

"MARIE ANTOINETTE.

"VERSAILLES, samedi, 1785."

[*Translation.*]

"*Dear Sister:*

"The dreadful scandal of the Diamond Necklace is still the talk of the town, it is in everybody's mouth. Let the Cardinal try as he will to save his reputation, he will not succeed; his effrontery and hardihood have too often stumbled against obstacles, no matter what support they have received.

"Your government will, I am sure, assist me in the search for the woman who personated me in the garden scene and then fled into your territory. Give the strictest injunctions in this matter, I entreat you.

"The Dauphin is playing beside me with his sister; both

are in good health. Now they are quarrelling and want me to be judge between them—it seems that I am never to be free of the law!

"Adieu, dear sister. I embrace you.

"MARIE ANTOINETTE.

"VERSAILLES, Saturday, 1785."

SECOND LETTER.

"VERSAILLES, 13 juin 1785.

"*Chère Marie Christine!*

"Je suis heureuse, chère sœur, que tu sois maintenant mieux informée de la chose terrible. Tu te souvenirs de l'audace et de l'effronterie de Rohan, qu'il montra à Vienne et de l'irrévérence incroyable en passant en costume de chasse par une procession de Fête-Dieu; lui, le dignitaire de l'église. —Au procès il a montré la même effronterie. Il m'a bravé même à présence du roi. Cet homme est d'une morale corrompue, et la Lamotte entretenait une liaison condamnable avec lui. Dans toute l'affaire il y a un rets d'intrigues qui échappe le tribunal. Des mémoires et réfutations suivent les uns aux autres et on ne voit pas plus clair. Un accomodement raisonnable est impossible. L'infame est allé jusqu'au point d'affirmer qu'il avait eu un rendezvous avec moi dans le jardin à Versailles et qu'il avait reçu là mon consentement formel pour l'achat du collier.

"L'audace de cette déposition a poussé le roi à bout et m'aurait rendue malade, s'il ne me fallait pas combattre et épargner toutes me forces, pour tenir tête à des orages tant cruels. Je n'ai pas encore vu les lettres de change, je les ai

exigées; il sont absurdes et portent la signature mal contrefaite: Marie Antoinette de France.

"Le roi, moi, monsieur de Bréteuil, tout le monde se demande, comment un grand aumonier, un homme, qui autrement ne passait pour un imbécile, pouvait être ébloui jusqu'à un tel dégré. Aussi ne peut on pas avoir la conviction, qu'il soit sincère à cet égard. Je me reproche, que j'ai attribué trop de considération à cette affaire.

"Torget, qui est l'avocat du cardinal, travaille, comme on dit, à un mémorial; c'est un homme honnête, mais il pousse son métier et Dieu sait, quels mensonges il nous fera accroire. Le charlatan Cagliostro a aussi publié un mémoire et de même un citoyen d'Arras, c'est à présent le sujet de toute conversation. Le roi le croit impossible, que la verité ne soit pas découverte.

"Adieu, chère sœur, ton amitié est ma consolation; j'y pense, que ton sang, qui roule dans mes veines est celui de la reine Marie Therèse. Notre mère est toujours présente devant mes yeux tu n'apprendras rien ce qui ne serait pas digne d'elle.

"MARIE ANTOINETTE."

[*Translation.*]

"*Dear Marie Christine:*

"I rejoice, my dear sister, that you are now more fully acquainted with the details of this abominable affair. You remember Rohan's presumption and effrontery that time in Vienna and how he had the incredible irreverence to join a Corpus Christi procession wearing a hunting-dress—he, a

high dignitary of the Church! During the trial he has displayed the same brazen front, insolently defying me in presence of the King. He is a man of thoroughly corrupt morals and entertained a guilty liaison with the woman Lamotte. Underlying the whole business is a network of intrigue which escapes the judges. Memorials and refutations follow on one another's heels, but throw no light upon the subject. Any reasonable adjustment of the matter is out of the question; the wretch has gone so far as to affirm positively that he had a rendezvous with me in the garden at Versailles during which he received my formal consent to the purchase of the necklace.

"The audacity of this assertion drove the King to fury and would have made me ill had I not felt the urgent necessity of reserving all my strength if I were to hold my own against these cruel onslaughts. I had not yet seen the bills of exchange, so demanded their production. They are the clumsiest of frauds and bear the signature 'Marie Antoinette de France' in a badly simulated hand.

"The King and I, Monsieur de Bréteuil—in fact everybody is asking how a man in his position and, for the rest, of no mean intelligence can have allowed himself to be so grossly duped. It is imposible to believe him sincere on this point. I regret having wasted so much consideration on this affair.

"Torget, the Cardinal's advocate, is reported to be engaged on a memorial; he is an honest man, but—it is his business, after all, and Heaven alone knows what lies he will ask us to swallow. The charlatan Cagliostro, too, has published a memorial, as has a citizen of Arras—it is the one subject of conversation at present. The King deems it im-

possible that the truth should not eventually be brought to light.

"Adieu, dear sister, your friendship is my great consolation. Our mother is ever present to me, and I do not forget that the blood of Maria Theresa flows in your veins and in mine. You shall never hear anything of me unworthy the daughter of such a mother.

"MARIE ANTOINETTE."

Surely it is enough to make one shed tears to read these frank and single-hearted letters from the hapless victim of a cruel plot. What an overwhelming amount of sorrow is often contained in *one* person's life! One cannot but wonder what judgment will be passed in after days on this unfortunate Queen. Will God never let the whole truth of this miserable intrigue be known?

During the winter that followed, the Alvenslebens seem to have been well-nigh chained to the house by the cold, which was so severe as to preclude all possibility of visiting or receiving even their near neighbours. Annaliebe writes in November already of twenty degrees of cold, and complains of the badly constructed stoves which devoured whole forests of wood.

It must have been about this time that Cecile carried out her intention of writing to her friend the Duchess Edmée in Paris; at least, so the following letter among my great-grandmother's papers would lead one to conclude:

"PARIS, Faubourg St. Germain,
The 3d Frimaire, Year VII.

"*My sweetest, best-beloved Cecile:*

"Words cannot express my joy and delight at receiving your dear letter. Why, it was as good as hearing that you had risen from the dead! To think that you are alive, sweetheart, that God has preserved you to me! I mourned you with many bitter tears, for, hearing no tidings of you, I had perforce come to the conclusion that you had fallen a victim to those butchers. And so you were saved and found a refuge in Prussia? Fancy, *chérie*, my being quite near you and never knowing it! For two years I lived in Gotha with some dear kind people and often thought of you while there. What an endless pity that I had no knowledge of your whereabouts!

"I have been back here a year now, living in my own house and in possession of all my former estates. I have reopened my Salons and you would stare in astonishment at the company that assembles there—almost *ancien régime*, for there are a good many old friends among them.

"So you heard through the Marquise de Navaillac that it was through Barras I obtained restitution of my property? You remember Monsieur le Vicomte, a kind of cousin of mine? He is an extraordinary creature; a compound of unutterable baseness and a few good qualities. What has he not been in his time! A noble by birth and related to some of the first families, such as the Pontavé and the Castellane, he was in turn officer, Republican, Jacobin, and at last Terrorist. And now having reached the summit of power, he is once more a Moderate—a complete weathercock, as you perceive, turning with every wind that blows. Decidedly his most meritorious action was in rendering that tiger-cat Robespierre harm-

less. He lives in the Palais de Luxembourg now, and what with his millions and his dazzling fêtes gives much food for talk. He is the greatest egoist in the world.

"A few good qualities, however, he undeniably has. He is faithful to old friends and has helped others besides myself. They say too that he is kind to his wife, a gentle, unassuming creature of provincial origin. He does not have her in Paris, *bien compris*, because of his numerous amours.

"He did me good service by advancing me a sum of money to purchase Assignats, for the face value of which the government allowed me to buy back my Palace and my estates. *Enfin*, I find myself quite comfortable here.

"You write, *chère* petite, that you feel yourself quite at home in Germany—but do you never long to see your own country again? Come back to us and I will see that you too are reinstated in your possessions.—But you must make haste, for I fear me matters are going to be serious ere long. The misery of the people increases day by day, and I cannot think this Directorate can hold out much longer.

"There is one man to whom they all look for salvation, and that is General Buonaparte, whose fame has doubtless reached you too. The millions he acquired in Italy alone preserve the State from bankruptcy. Possible that he is the Man of the Future, but, nevertheless, I am afraid no change of government can be effected here without much bloodshed and a world of trouble of every description. If, therefore, sweetest, you cannot come at once, better stay where you are till the crisis is over. I will write you frequently and keep you *au courant* of events. I daresay I shall be able to give you more information presently of this enigmatical Corsican. I may as well tell you at once that I am very much interested

in the valiant General, who has, as yet, been accompanied by the most unprecedented success in all his enterprises.

"Answer me soon and I will write quickly in return. Though I may not have the joy of embracing you very soon, our intercourse must not be interrupted. I can only hope that this distressing period of indecision may soon pass. My compliments to your—as you tell me—so charming friend. Take the utmost care of yourself. Adieu, sweetheart, love me as I love you.

"Always your devoted

"EDMÉE."

The correspondence between Cecile and the Duchess appears to have been very brisk during the next year or two, for, although there are but two more original letters from her among my great-grandmother's documents, frequent allusions in the diary lead one to conclude that they often wrote to each other. These remarks bear mostly upon Bonaparte and his family and give the impression of having been written down from some account of the Baroness that Annaliebe might the better remember them. As they often refer to hitherto little-known circumstances in Napoleon's life, I will quote them as occasion offers.

CHAPTER X.

THE YEARS 1797 AND 1798.

In the summer of 1797 we find Annaliebe and her friend under Uncle Briest's escort in Heligoland, whither my great-grandfather had sent them by the old family doctor's advice. Frau von Alvensleben had evidently been suffering from the effects of several severe colds, though she does not mention this, and Dr. Nikolai considered that the sea-bathing would be very beneficial both to her and Cecile's nerves. Accordingly, with old Herr von Briest as courier, they set out for a six weeks' visit to the island, Werner being in all probability detained at home by the harvest.

There was a constant interchange of letters between husband and wife, and Uncle Briest also contributes occasional highly original epistles.

The visit, which appears to have done for Annaliebe all the good doctor hoped for, lasted till the beginning of August, when her husband came to conduct the party home.

The long-promised journey to Berlin was to have taken place that winter, but the death of King Frederick William II. upset this plan, and the presentation at Court was put off till the following year.

During the intervening time there is little of any moment to be recorded; the family pursued the even, kindly tenor of

its way and the two ladies devoted themselves to the pleasant task of bringing up little Phillinchen in the way she should go.

In February of the following year came another letter from the Duchess:

PARIS, 10 Pluviose, 1798.
Faubourg St. Germain.

It is quite a long time since you heard from me, my dearest Cecile. Many thanks for your delightful letter from the Island where you stayed with your friend. I often think of you and long to have you near me; but, believe me, my dear, you do well to stay away from Paris just now, for things are still very far from being settled. Within the last few months we had another Revolution, only this time it started from above instead of below.

As I wrote you already, the financial affairs of the government were in a desperate condition; in fact, nothing less than complete bankruptcy was anticipated. Then came the 18th Fructidor, on which day the Directory, with Barras at their head, put an end to the existing state of things and, assisted by Bonaparte and his soldiers, took the whole controlling power into their own hands. How that all came about I am not in a position to say. I only know that on the morning of the 19th a proclamation appeared at the street corners declaring that the Directory had come upon a Royalist conspiracy set in motion by Pichegru, Barthelemy, and others, all of whom had been arrested.

No one seemed more delighted at this turn of affairs than Cousin Barras. When, a day or two after the *coup d'état*, he came to see me, he rubbed his hands gleefully and said that now his time had come at last!—He is at the head of the

government and, I suppose, the most powerful member of the Directory. He lives on a scale of fabulous extravagance, displaying an almost regal splendour, indeed his establishment is said to be considerably more costly than any of the Royal ones in the old days.

General Bonaparte then left to join the Army in Italy, whence he returned three weeks ago with many trophies of his conquests. He was received with frenzied enthusiasm by the people, who gave a great fête in his honour at the Luxembourg and did homage to him as to a demi-god—a reception, in fact, that had all the signs of a counter-demonstration against the Directory.

Did the great General, I wonder, come back with the intention of taking the reins of government into his own hands? Who shall say? It may well be, however, that he does not think the time is yet ripe.

He has left Paris again now, but whether with the object of joining the Army in Piedmont or of going to Brest—where they say an army is being collected against England—I could not ascertain.

You ask for more personal details of this Bonaparte. That, *mon ange*, is no easy matter, for he is so enveloped in mystery and legend that it would be difficult to say where fiction left off and truth began. I can only tell you the stories that are current about him latterly in our own circle to which, since his marriage with the widow of the Marquis de Beauharnais, he now belongs to a certain extent. More than this I do not know myself. Of course you remember the lovely Creole, Josephine Tacher de la Pragerie, about whom there used to be a good deal of talk? She is now Madame Bonaparte.

(There follows an account of Bonaparte's family history and his native island, offering, however, no special interest; but further on the Duchess relates a few incidents of his school-life at Brienne which may not be so generally known.)

At Madame de Montesson's a little while ago, Baron Léon Laurier, who was at Brienne with Bonaparte, was telling us stories about him. He said he was almost the only one among the cadets with whom the young Corsican had fraternised. Madame de Luys asked how Bonaparte came by his singular Christian name, whereupon Laurier told us an amusing incident in connection therewith.

"In the course of the confirmation service the officiating bishop asked the young Corsican his name. 'Napoleon,' answers my friend with an assurance in startling contrast to the nervousness displayed by the rest of us. '*What* did you say?' the bishop asked again, and Bonaparte repeated impatiently 'Napoleon.' The bishop turned in surprise to the priest at his side—'Napoleon? There is no saint of that name in the calendar.' 'Parbleu!' cried the cadet, 'I daresay not—it is a Corsican saint!'

"We got up some fireworks one evening," resumed the Baron, "and some of the boys damaged Bonaparte's garden-plot in which he took a great pride; then and there he rated them in such a tone of imperious authority that they were all constrained to offer humble apologies. I was standing close by and said in astonishment to my schoolfellow Dijon, 'Does he not seem born to command?'"

Presently Madame de Montesson asked who had first drawn attention to the young soldier, and Laurier answered that we had Barras to thank for that. It was at the siege of Toulon and a deputy ordered the young artillery officer to

change the position of his cannons. "Be good enough to attend to your own business as 'représentant,'" came the brusque reply, "and allow me to manage mine as artillerist. That battery stays where it is and I will answer with my head for its success!" From that hour Barras took him under his protection and has ever retained a great regard for Bonaparte, who reminds him in appearance of his friend Marat. It was Barras who afterwards placed him at the head of the Army in Italy.

On another evening the Baron read us a copy of the general orders issued by Bonaparte on taking command of the forces in Italy. I give it you here, *petite*, as it seems to me to sum up the whole character of this remarkable man:

Promettez-moi de m'obéir aveuglément et ej vous garantis, victoire et trésors. Cest l'union qui fait la force. Plus vous me respectez, plus vous vous ferez respecter. Il faut une tête à un corps bien organisé. Si vous croyez qu'il y ait parmoi, vous n'avez qu'à me le désigner, et je serai le premier mis vous quelqu'un plus en était de vous commander que à exécuter ses ordres. Dans le cas contraire soumettez-vous à tout et comptez sur ma reconnaissance. Persuadez bien à vos officiers, que l'obéissance à la guerre passe avant tout, même avant la bravoure.

N. Buonaparte.

[*Translation.*]

Promise to obey me blindly and I guarantee to you victory and treasure. Union is strength. The more you respect me, the more will you make yourselves respected. A well

organised body requires a head. If you think there is a man among you better fitted to command than myself, point him out to me, and I shall be the first to execute his orders. If such be not the case, then submit to my judgment in everything and you may count on my gratitude. Instil it thoroughly into your officers that in war obedience counts before every other quality—even before bravery.

N. BUONAPARTE.

That is now about all I have heard about the famous General. Doubtless I shall be able to tell you more presently.

But I have still to answer your questions regarding the Paris of to-day and more especially the reigning Modes. Do you know, *chérie*, it is really difficult to combine decency and fashion at the present moment? I assure you that some of the women leave positively nothing to the imagination. The craze for the so-called Neo-Greek costume, which has been in favour since the Revolution, demands that every line of the female form should be in evidence and lays stress on much that were better concealed. In point of fact, the mode discloses more than it hides. To me it is all quite disgusting.

I enclose you one or two fashion plates from which you can judge of this for yourself. I daresay it will be some time before this style is imitated in Germany. But, sooner or later, your Court is certain to adopt it. They tell the most extraordinary stories here of the Prussian Court.

The Bishop of Londonderry was at Madame de Montesson's lately on his way to Italy. He told us amazing things of your Royal residence, and spoke enthusiastically of the Countess Lichtenau—he ought to be ashamed of himeslf, the old imbecile! The Chevalier de Saxe was there on the same

evening, and the two nearly came to blows when the Chevalier boasted of the lady's favour.

Have I gossiped enough with you now, *petite*? You will, I trust, give me as many details of yourself and your doings in your foreign home. Remember me to your friend with the singular name. I think we are on the eve of tremendous events. I will write as soon as there is anything fresh. How I wish I had you here!

Toute à toi,

EDMÉE.

CHAPTER XI.

EVENTS OF 1798 TO 1800.

In the middle of 1798 the long talked of visit of the Alvenslebens and Cecile to Berlin at last took place. Adjutant-General von Köckeritz had evidently sent them an invitation in February which he repeated in July, and my great-grandparents decided to take the opportunity of the King's birthday on the 3d of August, on which date the Court went out of mourning, for presenting themselves to the new sovereign. Many Altmark families must have adopted the same plan, for Annaliebe remarks in her diary: "I expect there will be at least twenty von Alvenslebens in Berlin at the same time, not counting other relatives. How shall I ever remember their names? We are looking forward eagerly to our visit to Berlin. I have only been there twice and know very little about it and Cecile is much excited at the prospect of seeing something of a foreign capital. I had quite a business to persuade the dear soul to make some change in her wardrobe, for of course she could not go to Court in the mourning garments she has never laid aside since she came to us. At last, however, she yielded to my entreaties and a beautiful costume was procured of deep blue gauze worked with silver leaves, 'à l'âme d'argent,' as it is called. A gold fillet will be woven in her hair, and I am sure she will look lovely. For myself, I was

the lucky recipient of a perfectly *délicieuse* robe of white silk. Unfortunately it is cut very low, but I have had the neck partly filled up with tulle. To this I wear a turban of white crêpe spangled with silver, and trust I shall do credit to my Werner in this costume. Köckeritz has secured lodgings for us at the 'Golden Ball.' How I am looking forward to it all!"

The diary is silent till

August 20, 1798.

We are at home again and I can once more devote a little time to my dear diary. I am still half dazed at the mass of new impressions that crowded in upon me and the many new faces I saw in the days that are just past, but I will do my best to write down something of it for remembrance in the days to come.

(There follows here the account of their arrival in Berlin and the events of the first day—all of purely private interest.)

. . . On the following day came the "Gratulationscour" for the King's birthday. We ladies had to assemble in the "Red Eagle Room" of the palace, where Countess Voss put both us and our dresses under rigorous examination. She declared herself not entirely satisfied with the drapery round the *décolletage* of my bodice, so I pretended to push it down a little but, in reality, it remained very much as it was before. The Countess welcomed Cecile very affably and added a few courteous words on her appearance and her presence there that day. She then beckoned to the Marquise de Navaillac, who was overjoyed at meeting her compatriot. It soon got about who Cecile was, and many of the ladies begged to be introduced.

Our gentlemen, meanwhile, were in the "Rittersaal." The

"Cour" took place in the great white Saal, where the King and Queen were seated on crimson velvet Thrones. The gentlemen filed past first, headed by the Princes of the Blood, who afterwards took up a position behind Their Majesties. Then came the ladies, under the guidance of Countess Voss. The Queen wore a white robe trimmed with ermine, a necklace of magnificent diamonds, and on her hair, which was gathered into a Greek knot, a flashing diadem. Round her throat was the fine diaphanous scarf Werner described, from which her fair face rose like a lily.

When it came to the turn of the ladies, His Majesty rose and stood beside the Queen with a hand on the back of her seat, bending his head slightly as each one curtsied. He is tall and thin with regular features, whose stern gravity only relaxed somewhat when the Queen turned to him with some remark. Cecile came immediately behind me, her former position as Lady-in-waiting entitling her to rank as a married woman. As she sank in a deep curtsey and the Countess mentioned her name, adding—"one time *Dame d'atour* to the Princess de Lamballe," something quite unexpected occurred. The Queen suddenly bent forward, and taking Cecile's dear little face between her slender hands, she kissed her on the brow! In defiance of all etiquette I turned and caught the heartfelt words—"*Ma chère*, I am delighted to receive you—most faithful of faithful friends! I hope to see you frequently here."

Countess Voss shook her head reprovingly at this breach of etiquette, but the tears rose to my eyes at my sweet Queen's spontaneous kindness and I felt myself honoured in my friend.

The "march past" over, Her Majesty held a "cercle" and had those ladies presented to her again who were here to-day

for the first time. It chanced that we Alvenslebens—seven of us in all—were standing together. While we were being presented, and the Countess Voss again and again repeated the name of Alvensleben, the King came up. The Queen had just come to me, and as Countess Voss once more said—"Frau von Alvensleben" His Majesty broke in—"Half Altmark seems to be assembled here to-day.—Glad to see so many Alvenslebens—good old family."

He nodded affably as he spoke, though the short disjointed sentences did not sound very encouraging. But the Queen was all the kinder and was pleased to enquire after the cousins in Wissen, whom she remembered from her Rhineland days. She then passed on to Cecile, who was standing beside me, gave her her hand again and said, half turning to me and with that exquisite graciousness which is her special trait, "We hope to see both the ladies to-morrow evening in the Palace."

Refreshments were then handed round and the ceremony was over.

Next evening we were *en petite cercle* at the Palace. Besides ourselves there were only Köckeritz, Wilhelm von Humboldt, Count Arnim-Boitzenburg with his lovely wife and the immediate suite. The Royal establishment is on the simplest scale, not much better than our own. The furniture is quite homely, not a sign of regal splendour, whereat Cecile is much astonished. The *souper*, which was served at separate small tables, was also of the plainest. But an air of happy domesticity reigns over all, the royal couple live like simple private people and in perfect unity of heart. My admiration for our matchless Queen knows no bounds; such irresistible charm and tactful cordiality I have never met with before.—

My Cecile was asked for various details of her tragic story, and Her Majesty could not hear enough about the Princess de Lamballe. Tears stood in her beautiful eyes at the account of her terrible end.—After the *souper*, Countess Voss read aloud a few chapters from a tale of Lafontaine, the King listening too with great attention. But I was not sorry to be seated at a considerable distance from the reader, as I knew the book and thought it very dull—Köckeritz's somewhat malicious whispered remarks were decidedly more entertaining. My poor Werner did not appear to be enjoying himself much. He was beside Countess Arnim, who only speaks English, of which he knows very little. In his *escarpins* and tie-wig my husband looked a little conspicuous, all the other gentlemen wearing, like the King, *pantalons* and boots, and their hair cut short "à la guillotine."

The next day was full of bustle and fatigue—in the afternoon a grand family dinner at the "Preussischer Hof," at which all the Alvenslebens now in Berlin were present. Forty-two persons sat down to table and Cecile was the only stranger.

On the last evening of our stay we took tea in the apartments of the Queen Dowager, but it was very stiff and dull. I afterwards sat alone with the Queen while most of the company played "Boston," a form of entertainment which never appealed much to me. She asked after my relations and my dear home, and we chatted in quite an easy, familiar strain. Poor dear lady, she has had much to bear! She is very kind-hearted and seemed to take quite a fancy to simple me.

And now these days of turmoil and excitement are over. We have seen and done much that was interesting, but the best of all is to be back in my beloved home again with my

precious little Phillinchen beside me. Once more I say emphatically:

"Go East, go West,
At home is best!"

During the succeeding months nothing occurred of any great moment. Now and then, however, letters must have come to Cecile from the Duchess, and in the middle of December the diary gives extracts of one relating chiefly to the notorious Talleyrand.

December 18th.

Cecile read me the letter she received yesterday from the Duchess. It contained passages referring to the much talked of statesman Talleyrand which interested me greatly, as they give a different impression of the man from that I entertained hitherto.

"You know of course"—she writes—"that the Marquis de Talleyrand-Perigord belongs to one of our oldest and most distinguished families; nevertheless, the Marquis—then Bishop of Autun—went over to the 'tiers état' during the Revolution and formed later on with Sieyès one of the Committee of the 'Assemblée Constituante.' In conjunction with Mirabeau and others he afterwards founded the Jacobin Club. It was he who first proposed the sequestration of the Church properties and was the bitterest antagonist of the priesthood. It was he who celebrated Mass at the Altar of Liberty on the Champ de Mars and consecrated the banners of Liberty.

"Affairs threatening to become dangerous for the Assemblée, and his letters to the King on the storming of the Tuileries being discovered, he fled to America, whereupon the

Convention placed him on the list of emigrés and confiscated his immense fortune.

"After Robespierre's fall, he returned and obtained—through Barras' agency, I believe—the post of Minister, with restitution of his property. They say he is the most terrible egoist, but he certainly has an amazing influence over the minds of the persons with whom he comes in contact.

"Madame de Staël, for example, is a very clever woman, yet he has always made her do exactly what he wanted. It was through her influence with Barras, they say, that he got this post. We always call him the Sphinx—he is so inscrutable. He has chosen the most extraordinary person for his wife, a certain Madame Grant who is said to have lived with him for long; a woman in every respect—birth, intelligence, education—infinitely beneath him.

"This is the man then who now represents the State in foreign affairs—and very cleverly, too, I believe. Here in Paris Cousin Barras is still at the helm; but I can assure you the grumbling of the people waxes louder every day. The financial prospects do not improve, and the great sums from Bonaparte's conquests in Italy have ceased to flow in. The Directoire is hated, and everybody judges a catastrophe of some kind to be imminent. Meanwhile General Bonaparte —whom many look upon as the Man of the Future—is piling victory upon victory in Egypt, and a sort of fabulous halo is beginning to surround the name of this man, who already ranks almost as a demigod with the nation."

These were the most interesting points in the Duchess's letter.

Conversing with Cecile afterwards, and speculating on the actual fruits of this bloody revolution and what the French

nation had obtained in exchange for its well-meaning King, Cecile made a comparison which struck me forcibly and in which I cannot say she was altogether mistaken.

"Louis XVI.," she said, "was an honest and single minded man and his ideas of government were undeniably just and conscientious. He could not endure to see any one suffer, nor did he ever intentionally give offence. He was most unpretentious and diffident and of so retiring a disposition as to be often accused of misanthropy. In society he was always ill at ease and lacking in self-confidence. 'Now are not all these the characteristic qualities of your King Frederick William III.?' she asked. "Indeed I would carry the similarity between the Royal houses still further and compare the two Queens with one another. I firmly believe that had not our Marie Antoinette been placed upon the throne as a mere child, she would have developed the same noble qualities that adorn your matchless Queen Luise. The two august Ladies have otherwise much in common—the same classical type of beauty, the same regal carriage, the same ineffable grace and sympathetic manner. Both love dancing and all the harmless pleasures of life. Under the rule of the late King you had much the same unprofitable condition of things as that which obtained under Louis XV. and the same legacy fell, in this respect, to the two young Royal couples. Where now lies the enormous difference in the results here and yonder? It lies chiefly in the character of your people, who are not to be named in the same breath with the rabble that hounded my poor King and Queen to their death. It lies furthermore in the qualities of the Hohenzollerns themselves, whose rule has planted loyalty so deep in the hearts of their people that it cannot be rooted out."

In the spring of 1799 the following entry occurs in the diary:

April 8, 1799.

Darling little Phillinchen, how she grows and flourishes, God bless her! She is getting to be quite a big girl now and is raised to the dignity of having a tutor in the person of the Herr "Candidatus" Vultejus. What a queer creature he is, to be sure! Apparently no thought for anything outside his teaching and his eternal Latin. Cecile, who is so clever and anxious to learn everything, insists on taking lessons of him in this language of the *savants!* The Candidatus is very severe with her and it is rare fun being present at one of these lessons. My Phillinchen, bless her, gets on well in her studies with the good man.

A day or two ago Cecile received a letter from her young cousin in Brussels, telling her that he had passed his examinations well last year and now wished to train for the diplomatic service. He wrote further that his stepmother was in failing health and their pecuniary circumstances far from flourishing. Could Cecile not help him towards pursuing his career, and did she know of any means by which, like so many emigrants, she might move the present Government in Paris to the restitution of the family property? Then all would be well.

It was a very nicely expressed and sensible letter, and Cecile of her kindness forthwith sent the young man a sum of money for the furtherance of his studies. And now the idea of regaining the family estates occupies her day and night. She has already written on the subject to her friend in Paris.

I cannot bear even to think that I may thus perhaps lose

my friend. No words can say what she has been to me. The years she has spent at my side shine with a starry radiance in my memory! Nor can I think it at all beneficial to her to plunge again into the whirlpool of the dreadful city where she has already endured such heavy sorrow.

God will doubtless order all things for the best, and it is at least some consolation to me that the affairs of that Babylon of a Paris seem not quite so desperate as they were.

CHAPTER XII.

THE YEAR 1800 AND BEGINNING OF 1801.

THE year 1799 passed and a new century began. Cecile diligently pursued her Latin studies under the Candidatus, whose teaching of Phillinchen, my dear little grandmother, appears to have given the utmost satisfaction. Meanwhile the eyes of the whole world were upon France, and the events there caused a great stir even in this little sleepy corner of the Altmark.

On October 9th, 1799, General Bonaparte returned unexpectedly from Egypt. The campaign against Austria in the preceding year had fallen out most disastrously for the Directoire, and Austria was victorious at every point. This sudden change in the fortune of war was viewed with astonishment and dismay by the French people, who were at a loss to understand why the victors of Rivoli and Castiglione should now be the vanquished. Each reverse was accordingly laid to the charge of the Directoire; from all sides came angry mutterings of betrayal, and the existing government grew ever more obnoxious to the people. This was doubtless the moment Bonaparte had always foreseen. The fruit was now ripe to his hand—here was his cue for suddenly appearing upon the scene as the Deliverer of the Nation. He handed over the command of the Army in Egypt to Kleber and re-

entered Paris on the 9th Brumaire. The people received him with frantic jubilation, and offers of advancement poured in on him from every side.

Barras invited him to resume command in Italy, but Sieyès and Ducos, who carried the majority of the Council of the Five Hundred with them, proposed that he should overthrow the Government and combine with them in forming a new Constitution. Accordingly on the 18th Brumaire (Nov. 9th), supported by his brother Lucian, Murat and the troops, who idolised him, he dissolved the Council, the Government was overthrown, and the executive power vested in three Consuls: Sieyès, Ducos, and Bonaparte. Barras resigned and cheerfully withdrew with his ill-gotten millions to his country seat.

At the very first sitting a struggle ensued between the Consuls on the subject of precedence, Ducos, against Sieyès' wish, yielding the place to Bonaparte, because he had the sense to perceive that Bonaparte, with his energetic and forceful character, was more fitted to pilot the ship of state through these stormy waters than the cowardly and vacillating Sieyès who, during the recent *coup d'état*, had shut himself up in his carriage and cautiously awaited the result on the outskirts of St. Cloud.

Events followed thick and fast. On the 3d Vendémiare, Bonaparte, supported by the blind devotion of the Army, placed himself at the head of the State as First Consul with the privileges of a monarch, and the French nation received a ruler invested with supreme power. Bonaparte nominated ministers and generals, he filled all offices of state with his creatures, and the Army and the National Guard were entirely subservient to him. The other two Consuls resigned

and were at once replaced by Cambacères and Lebrun, men wholly devoted to Bonaparte.

This new disposition of office was made known on the 25th Nivose (Feb. 19th, 1800), and Bonaparte took up his residence at the Tuileries with almost regal pomp.

His first decrees from thence excited universal astonishment. He abolished the fête in memory of the execution of Louis XVI. and re-established the practice of religion, after which he closed the "emigrant list" and called upon all refugees to return to France. The nation declared itself perfectly satisfied with it all. Bonaparte knew exactly how to impress the people. His rule promised them peace and order and security, but above all things "gloire." For now he turned upon the enemies of the country. He and Moreau defeated the Austrians at Hochstädt, Biberach and Memmingen and annihilated their Army at Marengo. By July 28th an armistice—the forerunner of a conclusive peace—put an end to the hostilities in Germany and Italy, and the laurel-crowned First Consul was received on his entry into Paris with regal honours. In him France had obtained what she so urgently required—a strong hand to hold her in check, and besides that glory and fame enough to flatter her vanity.

Is it to be wondered at that, as his valet Constant tells us in his memoirs, he should have said of this people whom he had set himself to govern: "Le peuple français est une bête que chacun monte à son tour," and—"la France avait plus besoin de moi, que moi d'elle."

THIRD LETTER FROM THE DUCHESS.

PARIS, 15th Messidor 1800.

If, my dearest Cecile, you have followed in the newspapers the amazing course of events over here, you will do me the justice to acknowledge that I was a good prophetess. Did I not foretell all that has happened? If I date my letter to-day by the republican reckoning it is probably for the last time. France is at long last returning to her senses. Bonaparte, whose firm hand is now upon the reins, will soon sweep away all this republican foolery.

Truly, my dear, when I look back upon the events of the last few years and consider the difficulties this extraordinary man had to overcome, I am filled with admiration and amazement at his dauntless energy in quelling the Revolution. How he dominates the men he has about him! You saw that his first action after coming into office was to do away with the emigrant list? As he has begun so he will continue, and it will not be long before he brings in the old calendar once more, unless, indeed, he follows the old style and makes the new French era date from the first year of his reign.

What will be the final outcome of it all, I wonder? My friends here look forward to the ultimate return of our beloved Royal House and already imagine they see Louis XVIII. in the Tuileries. But I think they are deluding themselves.

Two or three evenings ago there was a soirée at Madame de Montesson's at which the Comte de Neufville and the Sieur de Dadigne, the two Bourbon agents, were present. The former was speaking of his recent audience (you see, the term has cropped up again) with the First Consul, during which

Bonaparte had said he would forget the past and readily accept the submission of all Legitimists if they would acknowledge him as the Head of the State, but as to placing the Bourbons on the throne again—that would only be possible over five hundred thousand bodies!

You may take my word for it, Cecile, *that* man will never let the reins slip from his hands. Must I say unfortunately? —do you expect me to believe Louis XVIII. capable of filling Bonaparte's present position? The favour which the First Consul extends to such of the nobility as have returned is already making itself felt. I hear almost daily from my friends of offers to re-enter the service of the State. Already you may see the names of some of our first families, such as the Montmorencys and the Montgomerys, figuring in the official list. Some of them have obtained restitution of their property, and that brings me to your enquiry whether I could not assist you towards regaining yours. That, I am sadly afraid, is not in my power. For that it would be absolutely necessary that you should come to Paris yourself and, even then, it would be difficult enough. What have you—a woman —to offer the First Consul in return? And without an equivalent he will do nothing. Would you consent to enter Madame Josephine's Household? Hardly, I fancy. You would do better, therefore, I think, to postpone your coming for a while, dearly as I should love to have you with me. Wait for a more favourable conjuncture of affairs. If, however, you would care to become First Lady-in-waiting to Madame Bonaparte, why then come without a moment's delay and you will get anything you choose to ask for. Bonaparte, you must know, has not hitherto been very successful in the filling of these posts. He offered the highest appointments both

in his and Madame's households to members of the old nobility, but only to meet with polite refusal. All the worthy *citoyens* with the *de* to their names who now occupy these posts are drawn from the class of small landed or financial aristocracy.

Only one of us, the Vicomte de Ségur, has followed the invitation and has been created Vicepréfet du Palais. But the old families all hold aloof from him in consequence; besides, he is not actually one of us. He was only reckoned so because of his great-grandfather and grandfather having been Maréchal de France. The fact is there are just a few things Bonaparte cannot get for glory or money. He has crossed the Alps and passed through the Syrian deserts, has conquered lands and holds almost autocratic sway over thirty millions of French subjects, and yet he feels there is something missing—to wit, that caste which for a thousand years has ruled the land under our old Kings. Seeing those Dukes and Marquises, whose services he so greatly covets, slowly gathering again in the houses of the Faubourg Saint Germain he sends his agents to them with promises of gold and honours and all their hearts may desire. But in vain. These nobles will have all or nothing, and the *all* means the Throne for their hereditary Rulers. That, of course, is the one thing he will not give them. And yet he is perfectly aware that it would be a gross mistake to destroy the nobility—as doubtless he has every desire to do—for he sees that he has need of them. A Monarchy without a Nobility—the link between the King of the People—is not conceivable. And so he waits and waits for the moment which shall bridge the gulf between him and this haughty caste. It would flatter his vanity enormously to see some of them in personal attendance on him,

the upstart, but also he would regard that step as a proof that the old order of things had made way conclusively for his—the new. Apropos of which, his former confrère, Siéyès, is reported to have said to him once that he would not believe in the permanence of Bonaparte's rule till he saw the old nobility once more in the ante-chambers of the Tuileries.*

And that, my dear Cecile, is what this great man is looking forward to—for that this Corsican is a great man there is no denying. Gladly as I would welcome a descendant of our Royal House to the throne, I am bound to confess that God has endowed our present ruler with extraordinary gifts.

For look you—in setting up this new throne of his he must begin at the very foundations. Nothing remained of the old structure, and he had no materials but his military fame. He must institute a new order of things and that almost without one necessary adjunct—no ecclesiastical sanction, no powerful aristocracy to support the throne, no background of family tradition; in short, absolutely nothing but his brilliant military record.

So what does he do? He makes haste to re-establish the Church and the supremacy of the Pope—with a view, I should imagine, to demanding his sanction in the future. Next, seeing that he cannot have the old, he does his best to create a new nobility, taking it, like Charlemagne, from among his old

* Madame Recamier relates in her memoirs how, later on, when Bonaparte was Emperor and Marie Louise of Austria shared his throne, the Emperor whispered to "Count" Sieyès as he stood among the Dukes and Counts of the old régime: "Do you believe now that it is all over?" To which the old diplomatist, now turned courtier, replied with a low bow: "Your Imperial Majesty has succeeded beyond my utmost expectations."—*Note by the Editor.*

companions-in-arms. Thus he has gradually built up a new Court with Chief Butlers and First Lords of the Bedchamber and all the rest of it; he has even evolved a fresh code of Court Ceremonial.

And all this he does entirely alone and unaided. But he thoroughly understands the nation he has to deal with. Let this people ever open its mouth to oppose him and he has only to stuff a piece of the gilded gingerbread of "la gloire" into it and all is well.

Speaking of Bonaparte's re-establishment of the Church, the Duke de Guiche told us the other evening at the de Noailles' of a conversation between Girardin and the First Consul over the arrangements of the gorgeously appointed chapel in the Tuileries. Girardin ventured the opinion that Bonaparte ought to attend the services himself. "Possibly," returned the First Consul, and then added: "It is necessary and so I must, but in that case have the goodness to provide the best music that is to be procured. It keeps the people awake. During the past years they have entirely lost the habit of religious observance of any kind. The only way to lure them back to the churches and cathedrals is by offering them an attractive ceremonial."

Girardin obeyed this command, with the result that the music here is absolutely unrivalled. The singers, both male and female, receive salaries such as no theatre can offer them, and the churches are crammed to the very doors.

Madame Josephine is to be seen every Sunday kneeling in pious meditation on her crimson velvet prie-dieu, a diadem of brilliants on her hair, *coiffée à la grecque*, and a trailing robe of pale blue velvet with short sleeves. Candles burn, the censers swing, and the priest stands at the altar celebrating Mass, and

nobody remembers what a short time has elapsed since a frenzied Government decreed to abolish the Almighty, and the whole Nation bowed down and worshipped the Goddess of Reason!

And, *vois-tu* Cecile, all this the great man has achieved alone, still surrounded as he is by the howling pack of Jacobins from whose jaws he tore the bleeding remnants of their murderous rule. They are ever prowling round him, seeking how they may destroy him; but he goes on his way undaunted, following the guidance of his Star, which has already brought him to the highest pinnacle of earthly fame.

There you have a sketch of the present state of affairs in Paris, and any one who, like myself, has watched the course of events for any length of time is thankful for the stability this Government appears to promise. It is devoutly to be hoped that things will remain as they are and that no assassin's dagger may reach the phenomenal, well-nigh superhuman, man who now stands at the head of the nation. Monsieur my cousin Barras is living in splendid retirement at his Château of Pierrefitte; very well satisfied, I expect, with his condition, for, between ourselves, he was terribly frightened lest they would take it into their heads to deprive him of the millions he had so industriously collected. It is a great pity you did not come here while he was in office; I could have done more for you then. However I will talk over *tes affaires* with our good friend de Montesson. She is in high favour with the First Consul and will be able to advise you better than I. I will write as soon as I hear anything to your advantage.

Till then and always your

EDMÉE.

More than a year passed before another letter arrived from the Duchess. This time it was to say that the propitious moment had come for Cecile's appearance in Paris, everything had been put in train for her reception. On September 21, 1801, my great-grandmother writes in her diary:

To-day has brought me sorrow to the very depths of my soul! I cannot, cannot believe that I am to lose my Cecile. And yet how can I do otherwise than approve of her plan? Her slender fortune will never suffice for her—I trust—long life and the demands her cousin makes upon it, and of course it is but natural that she should wish to recover what the Revolution despoiled her family of. Paris seems in a more settled state now. The Duchess writes she has done what she could to interest Madame Bonaparte for Cecile's affairs, which sounds encouraging. But oh, how hard—how hard the parting will be to me! How shall I get on without my sweet friend—she who has won my whole heart during these years of dear companionship? How am I to fill the gap thus made in my life? My husband has his many outdoor occupations, Phillinchen grows daily less dependent on me and has her regular hours with her tutor, and I, till now, always had my Cecile to turn to—nothing occurred throughout the day that we did not consult over together. And now I am to let her go—oh, it is too hard! I can do nothing but weep. I make the very most of every day, every hour that is left to me. Only three short weeks and she will be gone, and there is so much to be done, to be thought of before then. Besides it is so far, so far to that horrible Paris. She is going by way of Cassel, having received an invitation to be present at the wedding of the Princess of Hesse.

Cecile tries to comfort me and promises to write as often as possible, but what are letters compared with the spoken word, when heart answers to heart? Shall I ever see her again? A dismal foreboding whispers—no. Oh, these are days of bitter sorrow hastening towards me! We shall let Cecile have our carriage, it will be more comfortable for her than the stage-coach, and she can get relays of post-horses. We are going to accompany her as far as Magdeburg and dear old Uncle Briest too; he is so warmly attached to Cecile. Oh, I dare not think of the day when I shall clasp the dear creature in my arms for the last time. God be with us both!

Cecile left on the 15th of October, 1801. The parting at Magdeburg was very harrowing to all of them, and even old Uncle Briest could hardly speak for emotion. Annaliebe alone accompanied her friend to the Ulrich Gate of Magdeburg; then came the last embrace, the last fond kiss—a wave of the handkerchief out of the carriage window and the Baroness drove forth to meet the uncertain future.

CHAPTER XIII.

LETTERS FROM THE BARONESS.

FIRST LETTER.

CASSEL, October 25, 1801.

My own darling Annaliebe:

This will be the first of many letters to you, now that I am far away from the dear spot that came to be my second home. They shall tell you of all I see and feel and all that happens to me, so that, in spirit at least, we may be almost as much together as before.

You know, dear heart, how bitterly I felt parting from my beloved friends, and even at the last moment I hesitated whether I would not do better to cast these ambitious plans to the winds and remain with you in that haven of peace and sweet content. But the thought of Camille's future and the honour of our old name forced me to thrust my personal desires into the background and so with an aching heart I tore myself away.—For how long?—It is impossible to say. It all depends on the course my affairs take.

Though correspondence is but a poor substitute for our delightful gossips in your cosy little boudoir, I will write as often as ever I can and so bring my spirit a little nearer to yours. In the week that has passed since our parting, at each

beauty of the scenery, at every fresh acquaintance I made, I found myself calling upon you for an opinion, and many were the bitter tears I shed when I realised anew that my life must henceforth be passed apart from your dear companionship.

I was received with the most flattering cordiality by all the people—the Wulffens, Krosigks, Alvenslebens, and so on—to whom you so kindly recommended me. At the Spiegels in Halberstadt, where I stopped the night in their beautiful house behind the stately Cathedral, I enjoyed a delightful surprise. They had asked a few friends to meet me, and who should be among them but our dear faithful old Gleim! You may imagine how pleased I was. The conversation turned a good deal upon Madame Maria Antonia von Pessima Branconi who is just dead. I was much interested to hear something of this cultivated and charming woman—the mistress, you know, of the Duke of Brunswick—because Cagliostro, that arrant impostor who also played a part in the affair of the Queen's necklace, was a frequent visitor at Langenstein, the estate given her by the Duke, where she was fond of gathering round her a circle of poets and other notabilities. Cagliostro is said to have duped her too. I was rather surprised that the somewhat strait-laced Baroness Spiegel should openly associate with a recognised "maîtresse en titre," but the Branconi was really a most interesting and exceptional creature, and so the worthy lady doubtless overlooked her past.

I have been in Cassel two days now and the famous wedding is over. My friend Madame Schlotheim, the First Lady-in-Waiting, had made all the necessary arrangements for me and I received my card of invitation immediately on my arrival.

Yesterday was the great day; the Bridegroom with Prince Frederick and the Hereditary Prince and Princess having arrived the day before and taken up their residence in the Palace on the Paradeplatz. In the morning I went to look at the Trousseau of the Bride which was on view in one of the apartments of the palace. The dresses were displayed upon a long table in the middle of the room and round about stood smaller tables on which lay the body linen, the bridal robe, hats, coiffes, shoes, and various *nippes*. Many of the dresses were extremely rich and elegant; all had immensely long trains and separate sleeves, either of old point or embroidered muslin or lawn. The bridal robe, I was told, was a gift from your divine Queen Luise, who had chosen and had it carried out after her own design in Berlin. I was much struck by two other dresses, one a rose-coloured ball robe wrought with silver and edged with garlands of roses, the other a white silk tunic with a border of golden wheatears round the train, and the overdress consisting of a short *chlamys* formed entirely of gold fringe. All the dresses looked to me like more or less embroidered chemises or robes *à la turcque*.

Among all these latest fashions I was surprised to find that the shoes, even down to the *pantouffles*, had very high heels, for you remember Aunt Kroecher telling us, only a short time ago, that they were not to be worn any more as they spoilt the walk.

With flat soles the gait is firmer, more assured, more self-reliant so to speak, and that is perhaps why the Lords of Creation do not approve of them and always advocate the stilt heel for their wives. You see, it lies in the nature of the stronger sex to wish to lead and support the weaker one (please be sure to read this passage to your Werner, and Uncle

Briest had better hear it too), and nobody can deny that high heels impose a certain restraint upon a woman, making the man's supporting arm well-nigh a necessity to her. The discarding of the high heel thus marks a certain form of emancipation, a breath of the new spirit of freedom, as it were, to which the gentlemen are naturally averse (*compris*, Uncle Briest?).

The Bride was described to me as a gentle and amiable girl of a clinging and somewhat helpless disposition—hence the stilted shoe. Her mother, on the contrary, being of very energetic and independent character, has long since thrown off these trammels. Thus, Annaliebe, is a woman's character revealed in the kind of shoe she affects. Just ask your lord and master which of us two ought to wear high heels.

But to go on with my description.—From early morning onwards a closely packed crowd stood in the Paradeplatz, where I too was lodged in one of the *dépendances* of the Palace, staring steadfastly at the Princess's windows, for all the world seems much more interested in a bride than a bridegroom. The Duke of Meiningen was given a State dinner in the afternoon at Schloss Wilhelmshöhe, but as we had plenty of time before then, Madame Schlotheim and I drove out to see this magnificent palace and its surroundings. One could wish to be Landgraf of Hesse if only to possess this Elysium which, with its marble groups, its fountains, and long vistas, reminds me not a little of Versailles, though its splendid outlook towards the Harz and the green forests of Thuringen with their castles and picturesque ruins in the foreground makes this really much finer.

We returned about four, leaving ourselves just time to dress before the Court assembled at 6 o'clock, when we drove

across to the Palace. The gentlemen were collected in the Audience Chamber, where the marriage ceremony was to take place, while the ladies to be presented—myself therefore among the number—were in a gallery adjacent to the Landgraf's apartments and my old friend, as Mistress of the Ceremonies, had the kindness to place me in the front line.

One of the ladies, a Countess Bocholtz, if I caught the name rightly, was distinctly conspicuous by her antiquated style of dress. She wore a great *fichu menteur*, and instead of the high coiffure now in vogue, a huge blonde chignon, à la Dubarry of infamous memory, hanging in the nape of her neck, the colour of the chignon forming a ludicrous contrast to the lady's otherwise gray hair.

At 7 o'clock the Landgraf, accompanied by the Prince and preceded by the Maréchal de Cour and the rest of the Court dignitaries, set out to fetch the Bridegroom, while the Hereditary Prince and the Landgravine traversed our gallery on their way to the apartments of the Bride.

As they passed between the long lines of curtseying ladies, the Landgravine stopped in front of me, and on Madame von Schlotheim mentioning my name, she drew me up to her and kissed me with a few gracious words about my mission to England that time, also referring tenderly to my beloved Princess. She then proceeded on her way and again there was the crackle and rustle of silk and rich brocade as the ladies sank almost to the ground at her approach. They had taken but little note of me up till then, but now they stared as if I had suddenly received a Decoration. Hardly had the Landgravine and her escort left the gallery, than I was besieged with congratulations on the honour accorded me.

"One alone amongst them offered me no empty phrases

of courtesy and that was a young and lovely Baroness von der Malsburg, who had already attracted my attention because, in her dainty girlishness, she reminded me of Adelaide de Noailles. She only stood near me, gazing at me tenderly with her beautiful blue eyes full of tears. Almost involuntarily I opened my arms and she flew to me and sank upon my breast while she whispered, "Oh, I have heard so many beautiful things of you and have loved you so much without knowing you!"

Believe me, Annaliebe, the homage of this pure unsullied young heart was more, far more to me than the words of the Princess or the stereotyped congratulations of the ladies. I stroked the sweet child's golden curls with a loving hand and kissed the dewy lips.

Meanwhile the Bridal Procession had been conducted with much ceremony and blaring of trumpets to the Audience Chamber, whither we ladies now followed. The fair Bride wore the lovely robe of *drap d'argent* given her by Queen Luise and had a circlet of diamonds on her dark hair. Four charming girls, chosen from the first families of the land, bore her train. These Demoiselles were in white and wore wreaths of white roses.

The nuptial ceremony over, there followed a grand *cour de félicitation*, the Landgrave and Landgravine being seated in the Throne Room, while the entire Court, headed by the newly wedded pair, filed past them, two and two. Oh my dear, I wish you could have seen the Landgrave with his stiff periwig and all his eccentricities! You remember how Köckeritz used to describe him to us—if you could but have seen him sitting huddled up on the Throne, his head poked forward,

scanning with severest exactitude every button on the uniforms, every fold in the dresses of the couples as they bent low before him! "Le roi soleil" himself would almost have been put to shame.

When, at last, it came to my turn to offer my respectful homage to this austere sovereign, and the Maréchal de Cour murmured my name, adding, "Sometime Lady-in-waiting to the Princesse de Lamballe," I heard the nasal tones of the Landgrave: "Princesse de Lamballe? *Qui ça?* We don't know her!"—My sweetest princess—so soon forgotten, and by this princeling! Yet I could scarce repress a smile.

Herewith the wedding festivities were over for me, as I was not invited to the State dinner; so I drove back to my lodging.

When Madame de Schlotheim returned in the evening we sat together for a long time in front of the fire, while she told me a number of diverting stories about the Landgrave. Unfortunately I have no room in this letter to retail them to you.

Oh, my Annaliebe, when shall we two sit together again by the fire in your pretty room? How delightful it was when the great elm trees swayed in the wind and tapped against the window-panes, while the wood crackled and flamed merrily on the hearth, and no human sound broke the stillness but Phillinchen crooning her baby songs in the next room. No words can describe the healing effect of that sweet peacefulness upon my worn and shattered nerves.

And all this I owe to you, my dear ones—oh, would I were back again at your side!

Farewell for to-day, my sweetest friend; kiss Phillinchen from me and convey my affectionate greetings to your husband, to Uncle Briest and all who took such kindly pity on

the forlorn alien. My next letter will reach you from Strasburg, the next halting place on my journey. Adieu, my best beloved. Love me as I love you.

Toute à toi,

CECILE.

In my great-grandmother's diary under the date of the Baroness Cecile's departure there is affixed a little work of art: a posy of forget-me-nots and red roses surrounded by a wreath of immortelles, all exquisitely painted in water-colours. Written underneath are the words:

aime que j'aime,
tu aimeras toi même.

CECILE.

KALBE, October 14, 1801.

Touching this fond little memento and the already quoted letter there is the following entry in the diary:

November 2, 1801.

I have had to let some days pass before allowing my grief to find vent in my diary; I was almost afraid to put my feelings into words. My tears have not yet ceased to flow, I miss my friend so terribly. When we got back from Magdeburg, I found this delicate little bouquet on my worktable—a last sweet souvenir from my Cecile. I have fixed it here to mark the boundary across which a new life must begin for me, bereft of my soul's companion. How they all loved her! Everybody clamours for news of her, and now Aunt Kroecher writes begging me to send Cecile's letters round for each of them to read. But I think we will arrange it so: whenever one of these dear missives arrives I shall ask our intimate

friends—the Pastors, Uncle Briest, Aunt Kroecher, and perhaps the Schulenbergs, to come here and I will read them the most interesting parts aloud. It shall be a Temple of Friendship, like dear old Gleim's, dedicated to Cecile.

Dear sweet soul, how I miss you at every turn! Werner constantly turns round when we are alone, thinking Cecile is entering the room, and Phillinchen's cry is, "When is Auntie Cissy coming back again?" Uncle Briest seems quite lost without her, and as to the poor Herr Candidatus, his long sad face is piteous to behold. My Cecile had such a happy gift of treating all the trivial daily occurrences of life with grace and a pretty sprightly humour, so that nothing appeared dull or uninteresting. Ah, Cecile, you have left a gap in our lives which I doubt can never be filled!

God hold thee in His keeping, my best and sweetest of friends.

CHAPTER XIV.

SECOND LETTER.

STRASBURG, 3d Brumaire, Year X.

You will perceive by the above dating, *chérie*, that I am now in Republican France, and I suppose one must just put up with the custom till it pleases Bonaparte to recall the dear old months from exile. Your German proverb says, "It is best to howl with the wolves"—*eh bien*, let us then, by all means, howl with these brave republicans!

You cannot conceive, my Annaliebe, how utterly absurd these people are with their pompous affectations and their everlasting "citoyen and citoyenne." I feel all the time as if I were at a masquerade and can scarcely help laughing in their faces. Of course it is all the more ridiculous in a little town like this—I assure you it is as good as a play. Under the toga of their unaccustomed dignity the outline of the little German bourgeois is everywhere visible. They evidently consider this inflated demeanour a necessary part of their new rôle as members of the great French Republic. Yet I find many evidences of deep attachment to the old reigning house. An old locksmith came the other day to mend my travelling trunk, and when he read the name on it tears came into the good creature's eyes and there was no more word of "citoyenne," I assure you. He at once addressed me by my title and asked

with profound emotion for details of the last days of our poor King. And this after eight years! I was touched to the heart.

I travelled here by way of Mainz, which city I found still practically in a state of siege, all the magisterial and police duties being performed by young French officers. The next morning I had a long walk round the poor bombarded town and my guide pointed out great rubbish heaps which had once been stately residences, and spoke with shuddering horror of the past war which cost Mainz and its neighbourhood alone 150,000 lives.

I proceeded on my journey and arrived here the day before yesterday in brilliantly clear weather, putting up at the *Hôtel de l'Esprit*, where they gave me a charming room overlooking a sort of quay and a busy bridge.

Yesterday I viewed the sights of the town, my first thought being of course for the Minster, but as the weather was very windy and I did not wish to forego the view from the platform, I put off the visit till to-day and made my guide show me the town instead.

The magnificent monument which Louis XV. erected to the Maréchal de Saxe in the Lutheran Church of St. Thomas is really beautiful. The Marshal, in full armour, descends the steps towards the tomb, which Death opens for him with an imperious hand, holding an empty hour-glass before him. Behind him stands La France, who tries to hold him back—altogether a wonderful piece of sculpture. By a miracle this monument has escaped the destructive fury of the Terrorists and is absolutely intact.

Otherwise the men of the Terror have simply raged here, one monster in particular, called Schreiber, having played the part of a local Robespierre. Not content with the au-

thorised guillotine in the Market Place, he constructed a so-called "*guillotine ambulante*" with which he drove about the country, and by this means butchered thousands of people who might otherwise have escaped him. Finally, however, a like fate overtook him; they dragged the infamous wretch to Paris and put him to death by his favourite instrument.

Here too the population seems in the last degree dispirited, and at every turn you hear groans and lamentations of "Ah, how different it all used to be!" Many emigrants have returned, but almost destitute. The Republic has few friends here outside the usual mob, and all look longingly to Paris and the First Consul, devoutly hoping that he will put an end to this state of things by placing one of the Bourbons or even himself on the Throne of St. Louis.

This morning I was able to pay my visit to the venerable Cathedral, the most magnificent piece of architecture after Westminster Abbey I have ever seen. A dim mysterious light filtered through the splendid stained windows of the clerestory making a sort of magical gloom in the lofty nave. There is an immense stained window at the end of the chancel, and just as I entered the Cathedral the sun shone through it casting a broad band of jewelled light upon the pavement. The beautiful marble Altar, the cupola, and the famous Clock were all demolished by the Jacobins, and the fragments are still lying about the Cathedral.

I next mounted the 360 steps to the third platform, from whence I enjoyed the most superb view you can imagine, and I longed to have you at my side. The town lay spread out beneath me; further off I caught the sparkle of the Rhine and the bridge across to Kehl; towards the east the long range of

hills and close at hand a mass of high-gabled roofs with storks' nests on many of them.

From here too I could follow the line of telegraph, about which our good pastor read to us a while ago and, its first station being in the tower above me, I determined to go and inspect it. So I clambered up the additional 230 steps into the tower, and the official in charge had the goodness to explain the matter to me. It turns out to be somewhat different from the account in the Aschaffenburg newspaper. There are 42 of these windmill-like telegraph stations between Strasburg and Montmartre near Paris, and supposing each attendant to be at his appointed post, one can send a message from here to Paris in 45 minutes. The official was very anxious that I should await the answer to a message he had sent off half an hour before, but I did not care particularly to do so, and thanking him kindly for his trouble I made my way down the many steps and returned to the lower world.

Down in the Place the guard was just being changed and I stopped to watch the military spectacle. But what a contrast to the mounting of the guard in Berlin which we once watched together! The drummers—all half-grown boys—chased one another up and down the front, while the soldiers were being pushed into place. The officers wore cravats of every conceivable colour and the soldiers' uniforms were ill-fitting and, moreover, no two alike. There was no question of military discipline, and if one of them sneezed the rest exclaimed in chorus, "*à votre santé, mon brave!*"

Actual insubordination, however, is very severely punished, so my guide informed me, and my host told me that for an officer to pay a visit in uniform was considered a grave breach of good form. Therefore, naturally, none of them wear

uniform unless they are compelled, seeing that it closes the doors of the best society to them. However, I daresay this will presently be changed, since Bonaparte never appears otherwise than in his general's uniform.

I was undecided whether to remain here for the New Year's festivities (new style!) or not, but as it began to rain heavily, nobody knew whether there would be any fête at all. So I shall proceed calmly on my way; besides, I have had more than enough of this republican nonsense, though I fear it will grow worse the nearer I get to Paris.

My love to you and yours and our dear friends. You know that my thoughts are ever with you all.

In faithful friendship

Your CECILE.

CHAPTER XV.

THIRD LETTER.

CHALONS, 9th Brumaire.

Only a day or two more, my Annaliebe, and my letters will be dated from Paris. Your sweet words reached me just before leaving Strasburg. Yes, my dearest heart, what have we two not had to renounce in parting from one another! And the written word is so poor a substitute for the perfect interchange of sympathy in our two hearts. How sweet of you to set up a little "cercle" for the reading of my letters. But the best part of them—my feeling for you—you must keep to yourself.

* * * * * * *

Well, I shall soon be at the end of my journey—to-morrow, perhaps. Nor shall I be sorry, for the weather has broken and it is not exactly entertaining to jolt along all day in the streaming rain with the carriage closed.

I changed horses at Stützheim, a very pretty and well-built town. But what a lovely country Alsace is altogether, and the people—especially the girls in their picturesque costumes with the great black bows on their dark hair—amazingly handsome. As I neared Zabern the landscape grew yet more beautiful, and in the middle of the town, which belongs to the Bishop of Strasburg, lies the Château of Rohan Gue-

menée surrounded by its splendid park destroyed during the Revolution. I could not resist the temptation to have a peep at the place where my arch-enemy, the Cardinal, passed the years of his exile, and persuaded my postilion to make a slight detour for that purpose.

It was a mournful sight! Everything destroyed, the grounds laid waste; the outer walls of the château still standing, but the whole interior burned out. Nothing remained to testify to the glory and splendour of the ancient race with their haughty motto:

roi ne puis,
prince ne daigne,
Rohan suis.

Time was when all the country round, as far as the eye could reach, belonged to the Rohans, and where are all their great possessions now? Gone from them, every rood, and the Rohans themselves who bore the proud title of "cousin du roi" have dwindled down to the despicable Cardinal—the last of his great line. They tell me that he is still alive somewhere in Germany—at Ettenheim—where, I believe, he has some property.

I turned from the depressing scene and pursued my journey through the gorgeously tinted woods to Pfalzburg, where I intended putting up for the night.

I have had hard work accustoming myself once more to the difference in the meal times here in France—more especially the lateness of the dinner hour—7 o'clock. As I find it dull to take my meals alone in my room and it amuses me to listen to the conversation going on around me, I usually join the table d'hôte.

Thus here, at the "Ville de Metz," I dined in the general room and was much diverted by the conversation of some young officers of the 42d Regiment of the line, at present quartered here, who were freely discussing "le roi Bonaparte." Bottles of the red "vin du pays"—not unlike Burgundy—stood about uncorked upon the table, and these "sous-lieutenants" drank it out of large tumblers. This may well have added something to their high spirits, for they abused the Republic roundly, heedless of the presence of other guests, and made themselves extremely merry at the expense of Bonaparte's two colleagues, whom they were pleased to dub "the Shadows." Barras, too, came off very badly and they declared that he should have been made to disgorge his stolen millions. For the rest, their opinion of the Vicomte tallied in most respects with what Edmée wrote about him.

Not that *messieurs les lieutenants* spared their idolised Bonaparte either, and with the calmest assurance retailed the most extraordinary stories of his private life.

The name of a certain Madame Rose occurred with great frequency who, before making the General's acquaintance, had had numberless liaisons—had been the mistress of General Hoche for one. In any case, they said, Bonaparte's connection with her had distinctly been an after-thought on his side, for he had first paid court to the wife of the deputy Ricord; had tried to marry a wealthy old theatre manageress, Madame Montarsier; had been rejected by Madame Tallien, and had finally fallen into the clutches of the fair Rose. I could not think, at first, to whom they could possibly be alluding, till it suddenly occurred to me that Madame Bonaparte's maiden name, before she married the Marquis de Beauharnais, was Josephine *Rose* Tascher de la Pagerie. Bonaparte was the

first to call her Josephine, that name being more to his liking and also, no doubt, because the lady's reputation as Rose was decidedly not as dewy fresh as he could have wished.

The First Consul seems altogether to have a weakness for fine sounding names. Latterly, all his decrees have been signed Napoleon, which he evidently prefers to his surname.

I sat half-hidden behind a great vase of flowers listening, I must confess, with great interest to all this gossip, and thus I gathered a good many details of Bonaparte's life which were quite new to me.

It so happened that one of the party—a little, wiry, black-eyed creature whom they called "Prezzo"—was a Corsican, attracted to France, no doubt, by the fame of his great compatriot, and he had much to say of the Consul's home in Ajaccio. He described the unpretentious little house in which the advocate Carlo Buonaparte used to live with his beautiful wife Laetitia who came of the family of the Counts Collato. Here she bore him four sons and three daughters whom the little officer alluded to familiarly by name. These were Giuseppo, Napolione, Luciano, Luiggi, Gierolamo, and the beautiful sisters Elisa, Paolina, and Caroline. He then went on to speak of the vendetta which had existed between the Buonaparte and the Pozzo di Borgo for centuries and had claimed many a victim; indeed, he declared it was still in full force and that Napoleon had kept up a feud with the youngest Pozzo since boyhood.

From all they said, I gathered that these young officers regarded the General himself with adoring enthusiasm but felt no great admiration for his family. They spoke of the eldest brother, Joseph, as being *Inspecteur de vivres* at Marseilles, where he had married a wealthy but fearfully ugly

Mademoiselle Boyer; Lucian was *Controleur de fourrage* at the little town of St. Maximin and had married the daughter of a rich wine-merchant called Clary, who refused a younger daughter—Desirée—to Napoleon on the ground that "*one* Bonaparte was quite enough in his family."

I have no doubt that a goodly proportion of these stories was pure gossip and scandal, but you know that our learned Dr. Vultejus is fond of saying "*semper aliquid hæret*," and so it probably is in this case. Commend me, please, to my revered tutor and tell him that his Latin lessons will never be forgotten by me. A day or two ago I had a Curé for my neighbour at the table d'hôte and you should have seen his astonished face when I suddenly joined in a Latin disputation he was carrying on with a confrater!

However, to return to my gay young lieutenants—I would have listened much longer to their gossip, but as nearly all the other guests were gone and the stories began to be a little too highly spiced even for my eight and thirty years, I thought I had better retire from the scene. So I left the gentlemen to their confidences and went to my own room.

And this is the family of the future reigning House in France, these are the successors of the Bourbons who ruled over us for a thousand years! Is the exchange worth all the blood that has flowed to effect it? What, I wonder, would Rousseau, Diderot, and the other Apostles of Freedom say to this as the ultimate fruit of the Revolution which was to end in universal *Liberté, Fraternité, Egalité?*

What would they and the crew of *pamphletiers*, who so besmirched my poor Queen and the whole Court, who, with their high-sounding phrases, would have you believe they were going to create a very Heaven on earth for us poor mortals

—what would they have said to this Court of the near future, to this Dictatorship which Bonaparte already exercises over the whole nation? Surely they must have cried, "Tant de bruit pour *cette* omelette!" And what has this nation yet before it? Possibly much glory, but, most assuredly, a servitude unparalleled in its history and which is even now making itself felt at every turn.

I was very tired by the long drive that day and crept with joy into my beautiful bed, there to rest from my fatigues.

In one respect, my dear thoughtful, industrious little German *hausfrau*, I must say you beloved Prussians are behind my country people, and that is in the arrangement of your beds. Sweetly and comfortably as I slept on your beautiful home-plucked feather-bed, a French one is still better, and even during the years I have been away they are vastly improved.

Now let me describe one to you and I think you will agree with me when you compare it with the cramped little German beds, and you must not be angry with me if, for once, I find something more to my taste here than in dear delightful old Kalbe.

To begin with the beds are all very high, perhaps three or four feet from the floor and wide enough for two people. Two thick mattresses are laid one on the top of the other; there is a large round pillow called a "*traversin*" and on it a smaller soft *oreiller* and one or two eiderdown covers, very light and generally quilted with silk. The bed stands on casters and can be rolled into the middle of the room to be made and has a canopy over it. An hour before bedtime a warming-pan is placed in it to assure the absolute dryness of the linen.—There,

my love, now arrange a bed like that and write me quickly how you like it.

I slept profoundly and, the next morning, was in excellent trim to continue my journey by way of Saarbourg, reaching Chalons yesterday. I went to look at the beautiful Château in which my old friend the Bishop of Clermont Tonnerre—now, as you know, in Vienna—used to live. Both it and the Cathedral, one of the finest in France, were destroyed by those Vandals of Jacobins. My royalist host tells me that they actually sold the magnificent organ, a *chef d'œuvre* which had cost over a hundred thousand francs, for two thousand!

This, my Annaliebe, is my last halting-place before Paris. I think I shall have a good rest here and then do the remaining journey at one stretch.

I find the people here terribly ugly, or has my taste changed in the ten years since I left France? I can only say that since Nancy I have not seen a single pretty face.

My next letter, then, will be from Paris. What has the great city in store for me? I look forward almost with terror to the impressions and recollections that are bound to crowd in upon me there. Put yourself in my place—you know all I endured and all I lost there!

Adieu for to-day, my Annaliebe, dear companion of my soul.—Whatever happens I shall ever be mindful of your loving kindness and the many words of comfort you have bestowed upon me.

Yours now and always,

CECILE.

With regard to the Desirée Clary to whom the Baroness alludes in the foregoing letter, she married General Berna-

dotte, afterwards King of Sweden. I very much doubt if the version of the story told by the officers at Pfalzburg is the right one. From other sources, for instance the Memoirs of Barras and those of Constant, it would rather appear that it was Bonaparte who forsook Desirée, though she loved him sincerely, in order to marry Madame Josephine, the union with whom promised him greater advantages. Constant tells us that Napoleon often reproached himself for this desertion and did his utmost to make it good to Madame Bernadotte by giving her splendid presents—Madame Récamier says the same—and that he showed himself so lenient to Bernadotte's many faults of incapacity, not to say disloyalty, because, we are told, of his consideration for his old love. By a strange ruling of History, of all the Queens by the grace of Napoleon, Desirée Clary, the wine-merchant's daughter, was the only one to retain her crown. She was the mother of the present reigning House of Sweden.

As to the vendetta between the houses of Buonaparte and Pozzo di Borgo, it apparently exists to the present day. Not long ago, a descendant of Napoleon's implacable enemy bought up the ruins of the Royal palace of the Tuileries, which had been Napoleon's residence, and with them built himself a lordly castle overlooking Ajaccio. Carved in the stone above the portal stands the inscription:

"Built to the glory of his country
From the Ruins of the Tuileries."

Below, in the city, stands Napoleon's statue; there the great Emperor's name and his glorious deeds are held in undying reverence, while the remodelled palace of the Tuileries

looks down upon it from the heights—the palace from which the Bonapartes were obliged to fly; which, collapsing behind them, buried the Napoleonic Legend beneath its ruins. Oh, strange mutability of Fate!

CHAPTER XVI.

FOURTH LETTER.

PARIS, 22d Brumaire,
Hôtel Bateillère.

Herewith, my Annaliebe, my first letter from Paris, from this great Babylon on which the eyes of well-nigh the whole world are fixed.

The high road from Chalons here was more like the wide street of a faubourg than a country *chaussée;* small towns, villas, and smiling hamlets succeeding one another along it in an unbroken chain. I arrived at the *barrière* at 5 o'clock, showed my passport, and with a flourish of my postilion's horn drove into Paris.

The last *posto* to the capital is charged at double the usual rate; it used to be called the "poste royale," now it has no name, but the charge is still the same.

How enormously a city can alter in ten years! I assure you that, at the first glance, I did not recognise my old Paris in the least. The suburbs looked quite different, the streets are widened, and new houses and palaces have arisen on every side. Only when I approached the centre of the town did I recognise with a shudder the old familiar streets and squares, and the whole picture as I had seen them last rose before my eyes.

You were quite right, my Annaliebe, in advising me to give up my idea of surprising the Duchess and rather to announce my intended arrival. Surprises are so seldom successful and this was no exception, for when I drove up to the Palace I knew so well of old in the Faubourg St. Germain I found, to my chagrin, that its dear mistress was not there.—Madame la duchesse, I was told, had gone to her estates in Lorraine. I was comforted by the assurance that she would return in a few days; but, for the moment, I was really at a loss where to go. However, I soon made up my mind and drove on here to the *Hôtel grange bateillère*, which I had heard very favourably spoken of. There are two sides to every question, and I was not averse in this case to have the first few days to myself and thus be at liberty to revisit the scenes of my youth undisturbed. I obtained very pleasant quarters, although the house was particularly full, the Russian Ambassador, Prince Kalitschef, and his suite occupying the entire *bel étage*. A contingent of the *garde consulaire* is on duty down-stairs as his guard of honour, and two sentinels in high bearskin caps pace solemnly up and down before the hotel door.

My suite of apartments consists of three rooms with a charming outlook on to the Boulevard. To be sure it costs me 50 francs a day, but everything is dreadfully dear here, and I must just put up with it for a few days. My other expenses are, sad to say, very high too; my *valet de place* gets 4 francs a day, and the carriage, which is absolutely indispensable, costs me 15. The fiacres, on the other hand, are very cheap, only 30 sous the drive, but they are not allowed to drive in under the hotel *porte cochère*, and no *valet de place* would consider it compatible with his dignity to stand behind

one, so I am perforce obliged to use the hotel carriages. All the prices have risen, in fact, since I was here, a *loge* at the *Theatre français* costing 6 francs 30 *sous*, and one at the Italian Opera, Bonaparte's favourite theatre, even 2 francs more. Dress, too, has become quite ruinous; imagine, to give you one instance among many, that I had to pay 19 francs for a pair of silk stockings to-day! I do not think one could live here under 1500 or 2000 francs a month.

And what a change, too, in our manners and customs! In my day it would have been an unheard of thing for a lady of position to be living alone like this in an hotel, and now nobody thinks twice about it; indeed, there are several quite young Miladies from London here in just the same circumstances.

After breakfast I take a walk through the fine boulevards close by and amuse myself by watching these light-hearted Parisians. No visible traces remain of the sea of blood and horror they have waded through, and you never believe this laughing, good-natured populace capable of the monstrous cruelties they committed so short a time ago. They are but children who repeat parrot-like what they are told. The fiends who once yelled death and destruction to the upper classes have slunk away into the dark hells from which they came forth, and the people have forgotten that they ever listened to them—till the next time.

The First Consul and the never-ending praise of his military genius is the theme of every discourse. His victories have effaced all recollection of the late defeats in Egypt.

I sent for a list of the plays going on at present and, if you will believe me, they have never ceased acting during all these terrible years—even during the Terror—in fifteen

theatres! Now there are four and twenty in all. I shall go to the *Théatre Feydeau* this evening, where "*Le Comte Albert et sa suite*" and "*Palma*" are being given. I am going chiefly to see Madame Dugazon, who now plays the part of a mother, and I remember her fifteen years ago as the *jeune première.*

11 P.M.

I have just come from the theatre, my Annaliebe, and will finish my letter before going to rest. It was a very brilliant scene and the *loges* and *parquet* were filled with a gaily-dressed audience. Nevertheless, neither during the performance nor in the intervals when everybody promenaded up and down the salons did I see one familiar face. In these salons there are great buffets filled with every kind of refreshment, and waiters rushed about, even into the boxes, crying, "*Qui vent de ponch, orgeat, glaces ou sorbet?*" The acting was good, but the pieces very dull and pointless.

When I went into the salon after the second Act, I noticed a tall elegant-looking man in uniform conversing with a group of elderly officers. He might have been about 35 and his uniform proclaimed him to be a General. The box-keeper informed me that he was General Leclerc, the brother-in-law of the First Consul. I was much interested to see the famous General, the same, you remember, who on the 18th Brumaire two years ago dissolved, with Murat's assistance, the Council of the Five Hundred at St. Cloud and by Bonaparte's orders shouted to his soldiers—*En avant, mes grenadiers, au nom du Général Bonaparte, le conseil législatif est dissous!*

Bonaparte has really General Leclerc to thank for the successful issue of that *coup d'état*, for things might have turned

out very differently, and his own life hung in the balance at the moment.

So I had another good look at the man with his sharply cut profile, great eagle nose, and flashing blue eyes who played so important a hand in the making of this country's history.

However, *chère amie*, it grows late and I will finish this rambling epistle. It is to be hoped that Edmée will soon return and then I can go to her. I am anxious, too, to take the first steps towards accomplishing my mission here. I shall learn from the Duchess whether to begin by paying a visit to Talleyrand, or what other means I had best adopt to gain an audience with the Consul. I look forward to it all with dread and shrinking, but I will face it courageously; it is my duty. I know that your loving thoughts and prayers go with me.

And now good night, dear heart, I must try to get a little rest in spite of the noisy street outside my windows. In what a turmoil do I live now compared to the soothing peace which surrounded me in your dear home! I will write again in a day or two. Recall me to your good husband and all my friends.

Ever your truest friend,

CECILE.

Touching General Leclerc, the Baroness must have been mistaken in thinking the gentleman she noticed was he, for the husband of Bonaparte's eldest sister was at that time in St. Domingo, whither the Consul had sent him with an expedition. The Baroness especially mentions this fact in one of her later letters. From the description she gives, the officer was probably General Berthier, who was in the Chasseurs and was certainly in Paris at the time she writes.

CHAPTER XVII.

FIFTH LETTER.

PARIS, 8th Frimaire, Year X.
Palais Brancas.

I have been somewhat longer in writing to you again, my Annaliebe, than I intended, but you will see by the heading of my letter that Edmée speedily returned and that I am now living with her. As you may imagine, she has occupied a great deal of my time, so that I had little or no leisure for writing. The last few days were full of interest and excitement and I have seen and made the acquaintance of a number of people on whom the eyes of all Europe are fixed. However, I will begin to-day by telling you about myself and my new surroundings.

The Palais Brancas is one of the finest in the Faubourg and lies quite near the Seine with a beautiful park-like garden behind it full of magnificent old trees and shady avenues and mythological statues. My rooms, which are in the upper storey, are quite charming and furnished *à la Louis quinze*. On one of the walls hangs the latest portrait of the Consul which Edmée, who, as you know, is an enthusiastic admirer of the great man, has put there with a view, no doubt, to accustoming me to the sight of the All-powerful One! It is a copy of the portrait by Greuze. The face wears a totally dif-

ferent expression from any picture I have yet seen of him; it is not nearly so grim and stern. Edmée declares it is exactly as she saw him last at a soirée at Madame Hamelin's, a friend of Madame Josephine's, where he appeared with his step-daughter Hortense, to whom they say he is much attached.

On the frame there is an epigram by Thévenon:

> Qui prêtera jamais pour écrire son histoire
> Une plume à Clio ? l'aile de la victoire ?

I think you will admit that that is laying on the homage thickly enough!

When I woke the first morning the sun was shining into my beautiful bedroom through the green silk curtains. I jumped out of bed and ran to the window. All Paris seemed spread out before me under the cheerful rays of the morning sun, and the Seine was dotted with gaily flagged boats. There was the Pont Royal, there the Louvre, and there the Tuileries where HE now lives who has stepped into Louis XVI.'s place. I could see the two sentinels distinctly as they marched backwards and forwards in front of the palace. I leant against the window and gazed out at the dear familiar, never-forgotten scene and my eyes grew dim with tears.

As I stood thus, lost in recollection, there was a knock at the door. I hurriedly slipped back into bed, and there stood Edmée on the threshold of my room. I had only seen her by lamplight on my arrival the evening before, and now she looked quite different in the blaze of golden sunshine.

She embraced me, then seated herself on the edge of the bed and asked what had been my dreams in the first night un-

der her roof. Tears of conflicting emotions rose to my eyes as I looked at the dear, kindly face of my old friend. The years had left some footprints of course, but it was the same sweet bewitching face which used always to remind me of my darling Princess, a likeness of which Edmée had ever been proud; besides, she has a right to the Carignan features, being distantly related to that family.

She still retains the elegant figure of earlier days, and the brightness of her lovely blue eyes is undimmed. Although it was still early she wore her hair slightly powdered and curled à la Marie Antoinette. Altogether her appearance, as well as the exquisite courtesy of her manner, are quite *ancien régime.*

You can imagine, my dear, how much we had to say to one another after nine years; every other sentence began with "Do you remember?" She told me all about her life in Gotha and could not hear enough in return about you and our dear friends. We then came to Talleyrand and my proposed visit to him, to which Edmée urged me strongly since, despite the Consul's personal antipathy to him, he is very powerful.

However, I shall have to defer the visit for some time yet, as he is with the Consul just now inspecting some factories in the neighbourhood of St. Quentin. By the way, this journey of Bonaparte's may result in a great change in present fashions, the Consul having promised the starving factory hands that at the approaching Peace Fête all the ladies of the Court and in society should be dressed in lawn or batiste from the St. Quentin factories, instead of the muslin with which England is flooding Paris. I wonder if he will be able to keep his word? It remains to be seen what Josephine and her autocratic man-milliners Messieurs Despreaux and Leroy will say to it.

During our delightful *causeries* over the fire in my room (so like those I enjoyed with you, *mon ange!*) during the following days, Edmée and I made out a list of the families and persons with whom I had formerly been acquainted, and also of those whose influence would be of use to me now. Alas, against how many names had I not to put a cross! Either they had been guillotined during the Terror without my knowing it, or were dead; or not yet returned, or come to grief in exile.

Nevertheless, a goodly number remained, and so we shall start without delay upon our round of visits. First, however, Edmée wants to show me Paris as it is, and we will reserve the afternoons for our friends.

* * * * * * *

9th Frimaire.—I was interrupted yesterday at this point and will now resume my description of my doings.

At 12 o'clock every morning we drive out in Edmée's "berline," as they call the great hooded cabriolets here, and make a tour of the town.

Oh, my dear, how many things the Revolution has altered, but how few has it improved! The very first Place we drove through, the beautiful "Place Royale," built by the Duc de la Feuillade and where the bronze statue of Louis XIV. used to stand was hardly recognisable. It is now called the "Place des victoires," and they were busy putting up a monument which the Consul has raised to the glory of the army and two of its leaders—Kleber and Dessain. He laid the first stone of it himself a few weeks ago.

Then we drove on and came to the "Place de la concorde"—but where was its name and the imposing equestrian

statue of the Well-Beloved Louis XV.? It has become the "Place de la Révolution," and in Louis' place on the pedestal is a dreadful rose-pink, half-naked plaster figure of "Liberty." And, indeed, she looks it, and is a faithful presentment of that misbegotten daughter of the Revolution.

I covered my eyes with a trembling hand to shut out the sight of the spot where fell the head of my blameless King and my sweet Queen. For it was here they set up the hideous instrument, on one of the most lovely spots in Paris between the Champs Elysées and the Tuileries gardens.

This was the place too where my own poor head would have rolled in the dust, but for the goodness of God and my lover's heroic bravery at the last moment.

The statue of the *Roi soleil* on the Place de Vendôme is also destroyed, and they have not yet decided with what monument to replace it.*

And now the Place de Grève with all its memories lay before me. I have told you, dearest, that it was here my father met his death, and you can imagine with what emotion I viewed the spot where he laid down his noble life, a sacrifice which really cost me both my parents, for it broke my mother's heart.

And we forlorn survivors of those who were guillotined have not even a spot where we can give ourselves up to the cult of our fond memories, no grave that we can deck with flowers and water with our tears. Nothing remains to us.

* Here, in 1805, Napoleon erected the Vendôme Column cast from the 450 cannons taken in the battle of Austerlitz. The bas-reliefs picture the victories, and on the summit stands the colossal statue of the Emperor. The column was destroyed by the Communists in 1871 but has since been re-erected.

The inhuman monsters flung their victims into one common pit—some say in the catacombs, others in the Place de la Madeleine. Quicklime was thrown on the layers of corpses, then more bodies, then lime again, and so on till the pit was heaped. Whenever I asked any one where the victims of the guillotine were buried in those days, a shrug of the shoulder was all the answer I received. No one knew, or rather would not admit that they knew. It looks to me, in fact, as if the whole nation were ashamed to be reminded of those years of bestial madness. So all I can do is to pray for both my beloved parents at the grave of the one, my mother, in Père la Chaise.

But imagine, Annaliebe, what a horrible story Edmée told me apropos of this. They say that when Robespierre's fate at last overtook him, his body was laid in the coffin of King Louis. And how do you think they justified this impious act? By saying that as Robespierre had intended marrying the daughter of Louis Capet he belonged to the family and ought to share their tomb!

Can one imagine a greater irony of History? The executioner and his royal victim in one grave! And to think that for years this grave has been the Mecca of all true and faithful adherents of the Royal House; here they have wept bitter tears over the memory of the martyred King, and all the while the hateful monster of the Convention, the dastardly ringleader of that band of ruffians, is lying in that sacred spot. Oh, it will not bear thinking of—nor does it seem to me credible that Robespierre should have dared to raise his eyes to our little Madame de France, the Princess Maria Theresa Charlotte, and to have conceived the idea of being the King's successor. He was too fanatical a Republican for that and,

in spite of Edmée's assurance of its truth, I look upon the whole story as a fiction, just as I do the report that our poor little Dauphin escaped out of the clutches of his tormentors and is still alive somewhere.

I saw the sweet boy too often in the Temple and know how ill and weak he was then. I can see him now lying in his tiny bed that was hardly larger than a cradle. His poor little knees and ankles were swollen to twice their natural size, and death was plainly written in the glazed blue eyes. No, he never came out of there alive. Therefore the story about the King's grave is doubtless an invention too; it would be too hideous an outrage upon decency.

I begged Edmée to spare me the visit to the Temple which stood next upon our list—it was more than I could bear that day, so we drove instead to my dear old nurse, providing ourselves first with flowers and wreaths for my mother's grave which she was to point out to us. I found my good old Madeleine wonderfully hearty still, and you can imagine the joy of our meeting. She knew me directly and was as pleased as a child to hear how happily I had lived in Germany and had found such good friends. We took the dear old woman with us and drove at once to the Cemetery. The grave of my beloved mother was soon found and I could not thank old Madeleine enough for the devoted care she had expended on it during all these years. Tears of sorrow, even a little of remorse filled my eyes as I knelt there and prayed silently for both my dear ones, for I could not help thinking that I had perhaps absorbed myself too exclusively in my love for my sweet mistress, neglecting my father and mother thereby. And now it was too late to repair the fault. My only comfort lay

in the thought that there had never been one moment's discord between us, never an unkind look or word.

After covering the grave with flowers we returned to the Palais Brancas, keeping Madeleine with us. I had, of course, much to tell her and we spoke of my wonderful escape from death. Madeleine said that the Revolutionary Tribunal had been greatly alarmed by my Hector's bold expedient and had subsequently used the greatest precautions during the transport of prisoners through the streets.—Of the Vicomte d'Aubignac neither she nor Edmée had ever heard another word. Like my Hector he must have fallen a victim to these infamous butchers.

Adieu, my dearest, for to-day. I can write no more. The many and varied emotions have been a great strain upon me. My devoted love to you and our dear mutual friends. Edmée begs to be remembered to you.

CECILE.

I enclose a copy of Robespierre's death-warrant for your collection of rarities. Edmée is, like you, an ardent collector of historical and other curiosities. It is from the *Moniteur* of the 6th Fructidor, Year II.

DÉCRETS D'EXÉCUTION.

1. Maximilian Robespierre, âgé de 35 ans, né à Arras, ex-député du Convent national.

   L'accusé est atteint de vouloir mettre au trône le fils de Louis Capet et a trahi par ceci la patrie. Il est convaincu.

2. L. J. R. T. Lavalette, âgé de 40 ans, né à Paris, ex-noble, ex-commandant de l'armée française du Nord etc. etc.

   (Ici il suit les noms de: Custine, Houchard, Barnare, Baylly et d'autres, ensemble 12 numéros.)

Sont par ceci déclarés tous hors de la loi par décrets du Convention du 9 et 10 Thermidor.

Après qu'on eût constaté leur identité, ils furent delivrés au bourreau pour être, mis à la mort en 24 heures à la place de la Révolution.

Ont été exécutés.

Le Directoire.

Signé: Barras, Rewbell, Lareveillére, Carnot, Sieyès.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SIXTH LETTER.

PARIS, 15th Frimaire X.

A thousand thanks, my Annaliebe, for your sweet delightful letter. Believe me, dearest, my heart yearns for you as fondly as ever, and many a night I lie awake communing with you in spirit.—And how comforting your tender solicitude is to me! But you must not be anxious about me, dear heart, nor fear that I am putting too severe a strain upon my nerves by thus reviving the memory of the terrible and heart-rending past. Edmée does much to counteract these sad impressions. Besides, the worst is over; I have seen nearly all the places connected with my martyrdom and, the first sharp pangs over, it is in the nature of things that, though it never forgets, the heart grows calmer, and can contemplate its losses with unabated sorrow but without the bitter agony of the first days.

The day before yesterday, however, brought my whole tragedy before my eyes again when I visited the Temple and the prison of La Force. The apartments in which the Royal family spent their days of terrible captivity have been pulled down, but the great round hall past the windows of which they carried the head of my beloved princess is unchanged. Then we went down into the underground dungeons where I was imprisoned for many long weeks, and I had to show

Edmée all the well-remembered places and the little niche where I lay on my poor straw pallet.

The La Force was entirely unaltered and I passed with streaming eyes through its gloomy cells thinking of the dear friends who had set out on their last journey from thence. We afterwards drove through the street where the tragedy of my life had culminated. There were the same houses that had passed before my eyes on that death journey, and once again I seemed to see the hideous faces of the crowd and hear the thunder of the explosion and the mad shrieks of the terrified mob. Here were probably the selfsame stones on which I had last seen my Hector's blood-stained head when he gave his life for mine.—Oh Annaliebe, how my heart sickened with pain as I caught sight of the well-remembered spot! I left the carriage and kneeling down pressed my lips to the cold stone on which my Hector's head had lain. Edmée put her arm round me and led me away, and we drove off quickly to escape the gaping crowd that had begun to gather round us, astonished, no doubt, by my proceedings.

Arrived at home, I found your dear letter awaiting me to distract me from my painful thoughts—never was letter more welcome. Every little detail of your family life interests and delights me. Ah, my Annaliebe, your tranquil but deep affection restored the shattered balance of my life.

And now, my best and sweetest of friends, I have told you all I felt and suffered in reviving the memories of the past—it was inevitable—but I have done; I will neither excite myself nor pain you any more. My letters now shall concern themselves only with the present and what happens to me day by day.

In these days I have met many old friends again and we

have, of course, had endlessly much to say to one another. But oh, my dear, what sufferings many of these poor things have endured in foreign lands! and have occupied the strangest positions to keep themselves from absolute starvation. Few, if any, among them found such faithful loving friends as I did. I quite believe that in your utter unselfishness you do not realise *what* gift you bestowed upon me. The fervent gratitude of a lifetime could not adequately repay you. Adieu, dearest, truest heart.

Ever your own

CECILE.

FROM ANNALIEBE'S DIARY.

KALBE, December 26, 1801.

Christmas is just over, that sweetest idyll of our childish days whose fairy radiance shines on softly through the later years till it beams out brightly once more in our children's happy eyes.

Oh, my Cecile, how I have missed you! How I wish you had been with us yesterday and seen the children's joy. The Pastors' children were invited for the Christmas tree, and really it made one a child again to be amongst them. Phillinchen's speechless delight did one good to look at. It seemed so strange not to set out Cecile's presents among the rest.

I do hope the little gifts I sent her to far-off Paris arrived in time. To my joyful surprise I found a large parcel with the Paris postmark on my already heaped up Christmas table, and on opening it discovered the beautiful little new-fashioned musical instrument they call a guitar. How sweet of Cecile

to think of giving me this melodious present; its shape is so charming and it is so light and easy to hold. She says not a word about it in her letter, and I am ignorant of the proper method of playing it; but as there is a little parcel of music with it and I already play the harp, I daresay I shall soon find out.

Her dear long letter, however, pleased me most of all. My poor darling, what sad, heart-stirring emotions you must have struggled with during these last weeks! Everything in Paris must remind you of those days of terrible suffering and of your lost love. Oh faithful heart, that neither time nor Death can turn from its allegiance, that cannot conceive the possibility of seeking to replace the lost delight!

CHAPTER XIX.

SEVENTH LETTER.

PARIS, 3d Nivose XI.

My beloved Annaliebe:

A thousand thousand thanks for your loving letter and the fascinating little gifts you made for me with your dear clever hands.

I trust my letter reached you by Christmas and that the little guitar pleased you. It is greatly in vogue here with the ladies, and I do not think you will find any difficulty in learning to play it. It will form a charming accompaniment to your sweet voice—would that I could hear it!—as a solo instrument it is not very satisfactory. I thought much on Christmas Eve of you all and the many beautiful Christmas festivals I had shared with you at home. Here, you know, there is nothing of the kind, though Edmée invited a few friends to spend the evening with us and distributed her *étrennes* amongst us instead of waiting for the New Year. These were mostly *confiseries*, the finest of which I pass on to you herewith for Phillinchen. Kiss her from me and tell her she is not to forget Aunt Cecile.

Since writing to you last, we have made most of the visits set down upon our list.

One of the first was to the Marquise de Montesson, whom

you know from Edmée's letters and also as an old friend of my youth.

Her amiability and tact have made her beloved and respected by all parties and the First Consul holds her in high esteem. He has given her a pension and induced her to open her *salons* immediately after the Revolution, but it is principally the old nobility who go there whom Bonaparte is so anxious to win over.

She received me with open arms and embraced me tenderly. Though aged the Marquise has lost none of her exquisite charm and distinction.

She receives three times a week at 6 o'clock, and when we arrived there were already some thirty or forty ladies and gentlemen of all ages assembled in the rooms. Among them I found many friends and acquaintances of old days, and looking round these rooms filled with pictures of the Royal family and all that was in fashion before the great upheaval; when I saw the servants in their powdered wigs and gala liveries handing round tea to these beautiful women with their soft voices and cultured speech, I almost felt that the interval had been a horrid dream and that I was back in the old days of my fair Queen Marie Antoinette.

Several of the ladies told me that this circle of the old nobility lives quite to itself and takes no part whatever in the new Court and the festivities given there.—They alone will not adopt the new fashion of dress. Even those who have managed to save their fortune make not the slightest show of luxury, living quietly and forming a society in themselves, but—it is nevertheless the first society of Paris. They are nearly all people of high culture and refinement, and many of them—women as well as men—famous in one way or an-

other. Besides, they have been joined by many of the old French *savants* and members of the Academy, also by more than one distinguished foreigner who find themselves out of touch with the manners of the *new* society.

Although this circle professes to ignore the parvenu Bonaparte and all his works, I found that, nevertheless, conversation turned perpetually upon the new Court, and many were the bitingly satirical stories that were told about its shortcomings.

The Prince de Poix led the van in this respect, though Edmée whispered to me that in spite of his scandal he was much inclined to the new régime.

One of the Prince's stories had for its heroine the Madame Grant whom Talleyrand married, and whose life formerly had been, I believe, extremely loose. The first time she entered the salons of Madame Bonaparte as the Marquise de Talleyrand-Perigord the Consul is said to have remarked to her—"I trust that Madame Talleyrand will make us forget Madame Grant."

To which she replied—though I can scarcely believe this part of the Prince's story, for they say she is dreadfully stupid—"Monsieur le Consul, I shall endeavour to follow Madame Bonaparte's example in every way."

If this answer is true it was a very clever slap at Madame Josephine's past.

The newly organised Court bows down before the First Consul with truly military subservience though to all alike he is brusque and harsh; and even when he tries to be polite he only succeeds in being patronising. His whole manner therefore gives one an impression of roughness and ill-breeding,

and he often employs expressions which are more fitted for the camp than the drawing-room.

No wonder then that Madame Josephine, as I hear, does not feel quite in her element in this new Court and tries to regain access to the society into which she was born. She does her utmost to entice the ladies of our set into her Household, but it is love's labour lost.

Edmée listened with an ironical smile to these stories against her hero, and remarked as we drove home that, despite the sarcasm of the company, she could name several who had managed to accommodate themselves to the new order of things.

But the people who interested me most on that evening, after my dear Maman Montesson, were the Baroness de Staël and the Marquis de Luchesini who seemed quite on the footing of a member of the household.

Place aux dames, dearest, and so I will begin with Madame de Staël. I knew her slightly before when her father, Necker, was Minister of Finance to the King. She must be 34 now, but I was quite astonished at her beauty and youthful appearance. She is quite lovely and the very personification of grace, with splendid hair and wonderful dark eyes that seem to express every passing emotion, every changing thought. She seems to possess an unerring instinct for the manners of the great world and bears herself as nobly as if her forefathers had been dukes and princes instead of little provincial bourgeois. Her fame as an authoress and the part she played in the Revolution are known to all the world. However, since her life was in danger during the Terror and she fled with her father to Coppet on the Lake of Geneva she has entirely reversed her opinions and, like most converts, is now an extreme Legitimist.

She married the Baron de Staël-Holstein in 1786, but the union has not been a particularly happy one, I hear, and the two have lived mostly apart. Latterly, however, since the Baron fell seriously ill there has been a *rapprochement* and Madame nurses her husband with unfailing devotion. Otherwise she is wholly absorbed in her literary work.

When this celebrated lady came up to me and, embracing me affectionately, spoke of the days of our early acquaintance, I was subjugated by the charm of her manner and the influence of her great mind, and returned her greeting most cordially. She is indeed an extraordinary woman. In the days when we were young girls together, and the rest of us thought of nothing but dancing and amusements, she was already writing the most thoughtful books on the profoundest problems of life.

As to the Marquis Luchesini, I was of course particularly interested in him, first as being the ambassador for Prussia, my dear second home, and then because of the crowd of amusing stories Philipp Alvensleben and Köckeritz used to tell us of him, his *femme irrésolue* and her sisters. What a funny black-haired, Jewish-looking mannikin it is, to be sure! I must say, I was ashamed to see Prussia represented by such a man. I heard a great deal about him, for everybody seems to know him and his peculiar qualities well. They say that he stands well with Talleyrand, but that the First Consul cannot endure him. The Marquise was there too, an extremely stout and by no means pretty woman in a hyper-fashionable toilette, so *décolletée* as to be absolutely indecent. The two made a mysteriously sinister impression on me and no one seemed to affect their company much, although the Marquise raved about Paris, saying it was her dearest wish to be able to spend the rest of her life there. The Marquis made himself very

agreeable and told me much that was interesting about my dear Berlin, but, for all that, the man was thoroughly distasteful to me, and I believe him to be so self-seeking and unscrupulous as to sacrifice the interests of your country to further his own ends.

Yesterday evening we were at the Italian Opera. This is Bonaparte's favourite theatre. The house is extremely well decorated and splendidly lighted—altogether Paris is far in advance of Berlin in the matter of lighting. The orchestra was perfect and the company unsurpassable; it is a disgrace to Paris that the opera house finds so little support, one sees only actual musical connoisseurs there. I believe the Parisians are too blindly devoted to their own productions to admit the claims of foreigners to any merit.

Bonaparte was present with his wife and step-daughter Hortense, but he sat so far back in the *loge* behind his wife that I scarcely saw him, the *loge* being on the same side of the theatre as our own. The Consul had about thirty of his guards with him, who were distributed over a number of *loges*. He left an hour before the end of the opera, but Madame remained to the last and drove away in an elegant English carriage with two footmen.

As Bonaparte rose to leave, the whole audience stood up and gave him a perfect ovation. For a moment, then, I saw his face as he gazed down unmoved at the cheering crowd. Then he bent his head slightly and disappeared.

This demonstration is doubtless the result of his late narrow escape from death, a plot hatched by the Jacobins, who are for ever on the outlook for a chance to assassinate him. Madame de Montesson, who was with us that evening in the theatre, told me all about it. The plan was to blow up the Con-

sul by an infernal machine, something of the kind employed by my Hector when he saved me from the guillotine. But Providence mercifully averted this calamity which, in these unsettled times, might have had incalculably mischievous results. The coachman driving the Consul's carriage was a cool-headed German who, catching sight suddenly of a small handcart with a barrel on it just in front of him, and some suspicious-looking men prowling near it, without a moment's hesitation whipped up his horses and dashed past at a furious gallop.—Almost at the same moment the barrel exploded with a report like thunder, the houses rocked, glass and bricks rained down upon the pavements, and a number of people were frightfully injured or killed outright—but the Consul escaped unhurt.

He was on his way to the Opera House, where Haydn's "Creation" was being performed that evening. By the time he appeared in the Royal loge, his usual marble demeanour no whit disturbed, the news of the attempt on his life had reached and spread through the house. The performers were no doubt affected by this; in any case, the singing did not meet with the Consul's approval. When, at the close of the performance, some of the leading singers presented themselves before Bonaparte to congratulate him on his escape, he answered gruffly: "*Je vous remercie, messieurs, mais vous avez chanté comme des cochons!*"

By which, my Annaliebe, you will see that the great man cannot be accused of too excessive politeness. Even his adored Josephine came in for a share of his harsh temper that evening, for when, bathed in tears, she flew out of her loge to meet him, he begged her sharply to collect herself, adding, "Remember, Madame, you are not a fishwife." He evi-

dently expects the same imperturbable coolness and self-control from his surroundings as he possesses himself.

The First Consul has now removed his official residence to St. Cloud and only comes to the Tuileries on business of the State. It is very doubtful if he will return to Paris at all this winter; everything is being arranged for a permanent stay at St. Cloud. The immense regiment of domestics is lodged in some great monastery buildings close by the palace. But Mistrust goes the rounds and Suspicion is the sentinel, and the poor inhabitants of St. Cloud have been forbidden, by express order of the First Consul, to use any promenade but the one along the river; the Park is inexorably closed to them.

In other respects his Household is daily conforming more and more to the pattern of a royal one, in fact the whole current of things is setting rapidly towards a Monarchy, and you will see that the strong man now at the head of affairs will not suffer these half measures much longer.

My visit to Talleyrand must still be deferred, as he has not yet returned from Lunéville, where he is drawing up the final conditions of the Peace. After all, he is a great statesman and has just secured for France by the Peace of Lunéville a territory about a third as large as all Prussia. Here he is almost as much talked about as his great master.

You write that I am to describe the latest modes in vogue here. That is no easy task, I can assure you; but I enclose you herewith a fashion-plate which will give you some idea of a really new costume which combines elegance with decency—a pair often more widely separated than one might wish.

As to the men—they all wear their hair now cut short à la

Titus, blue coats with black collars and brass buttons, a short yellow *gilet* with large collar and revers, and long black cassimere *pantalons*. If one wishes to be ultra-modish, an enormous three-cornered hat under the arm must be carried.

But now I really must close this unconscionably long letter and say good-bye for to-day, my sweetest friend. However, as we are on the subject of fashions, let me send you herewith the very latest frivolity—a glove-nut. I think the pair inside will just fit your pretty little hands, and if, after wearing them, you fail to pack them into the nut again, never mind—I could not either with my own. It is only a toy. And now adieu, *mon ange*, I look forward confidently to a letter from you to-morrow.

CECILE.

How justly the Baroness gauged the character of the Marquis de Luchesini was amply proved by his subsequent actions, which were most disastrous for Prussia. Napoleon's ever-growing distrust of Prussia must be ascribed solely to Luchesini's influence. It was the triumvirate Haugwitz, Lombard, and Luchesini who brought about Prussia's downfall at that period. When in 1806 Luchesini concluded the shameful armistice with the Emperor Napoleon which the King refused to accept, he was dismissed. From that time till his death in 1825 he was Chamberlain to the Princess Elise, Napoleon's youngest sister, who married the enormously wealthy Prince Bacciochi.

CHAPTER XX.

EIGHTH LETTER.

PARIS, 14th Nivose XI.

My darling Annaliebe:

At last, my great wish has been fulfilled and I have had a good view of the mighty Bonaparte, the man on whom the eyes of the whole world are fixed in wonder and expectation.

There was to be a grand parade of troops in front of the Tuileries at 11 o'clock in the morning; accordingly Edmée and I drove there, but found that having omitted to procure tickets we were not allowed to pass the *grille* and so only obtained an impression of the parade as a whole; we were too far off for the details.

This was the spot on which on August 10th, 1792, the Swiss guards were so brutally cut down defending the palace against the onslaught of the populace. Oh, if the King had only had some of Bonaparte's energy at that time, how differently things would have turned out!

At 11 o'clock the troops, numbering about 7000 men, began to march up, the cavalry being the *garde consulaire* and the infantry the *corps des vétérans.* It is considered a great distinction to belong to the former extremely *élite* regiment, as only the finest men with at least three campaigns behind them are admitted to it.

On the stroke of 12 Bonaparte came galloping up on a superb white horse accompanied by several Generals—among whom Edmée pointed out Berthier and Lannes—and his Adjutants. Immediately behind him rode his Mameluke Roustan, whom the Sheik El Bekri had given him in Egypt and who is never far from Bonaparte's side. At night he lies across the Consul's door and is devotedly attached to him. He was riding a thoroughbred arab with gorgeous trappings and wore a most striking costume—a red velvet fez with a tuft of white feathers fastened by a gold agraffe, a short gold-embroidered jacket, and wide trousers of the same material stuffed into high yellow leather boots. At his side hung a curved Turkish scimiter, the hilt and scabbard encrusted with brilliants that flashed in the sunlight as he rode.

And now the drums rolled and the air resounded with the shouts of "Vive Bonaparte—vive notre Général!" It was the first time the Consul had appeared in public since the Peace, and the people received him with frenzied enthusiasm.

I saw him about four times as he galloped up and down the ranks. He is not tall and wore a red gold-embroidered coat and a large hat without any feathers. I was too far off to distinguish his features, but he is extremely pale. His inspection over, he went to the middle of the Place surrounded by the Generals and distributed a few swords of honour and rifles. During the whole parade he never once touched his hat, but as he galloped past the veterans he bared his head. The troops then all marched past him and so out of the Place.

The uniforms of the Generals were very richly embroidered, and as to the drummers, their coats were simply stiff with gold. As each drum-major marched past Bonaparte he threw his great baton, decorated with an enormous crimson

tassel, high in the air, almost to the first-floor windows of the palace, and caught it again most adroitly; I did not see one baton fall to the ground. In distributing the decorations the Consul said a few words to each recipient, and to some of them he gave his hand.

There was another long roll of drums and the massed bands burst into the Marseillaise. Oh Annaliebe, I cannot describe the sensation of hearing that song for the first time since the Revolution! Rouget de Lisle little dreamt, when, full of enthusiasm for Diderot's noble ideals of liberty, he wrote it, to what base uses it would fall during the Revolution!

To-day it was played in honour of the Dictator. Again there were deafening shouts of "Vive notre Général Bonaparte!" and the Consul rode slowly back to the Tuileries.

This, dearest friend, was my first sight of the omnipotent man who can make or mar my future. If I only knew how best to obtain an audience of him! Madame Josephine will be the best medium I think.

After the Parade we drove out to Longchamps, where there is a sort of Corso now every afternoon, and the elegants of both sexes show off the very latest fashions in toilettes and carriages. Apropos of the latter, I notice that the coachman's box is now set so low that it seems in danger of scraping the ground, whereas, in my time, it was so high that one might almost step from it into the first-floor windows.

We met numbers of cabriolets containing really beautiful women, some of whom Edmée named to me, for instance, the lovely Madame Lannes who drove past us with her husband the Maréchal, known as the "Roland of the Army" because of his statuesque appearance. She is like one of Murillo's Madonnas and wore a very pale-coloured robe *à la Grecque.*

All the toilettes are in very light tints, as the First Consul dislikes dark colours.

The fashionable colour is still brown "terre d'Egypte," though since the late sanguinary battles there it will probably be changed to crimson "terre d'Egypte." Enormously long trains are still prevalent and the promenade on foot is consequently intolerable from the dust. Please reassure Uncle Briest at once, however, by telling him that I have no intention of following any of these abnormities in fashion.

But ask him, with my love, if he has not yet become the proud possessor of one of the new high hats I observed to be the latest thing for gentlemen on the Corso. These are tall cylinders of black felt, smooth as mirrors, and look exactly like chimney-pots. I really thought I must be at a masquerade. Edmée told me that the hatter—Thierry is his name—who invented them made a wager that he would introduce the very most absurd shape imaginable and it would become fashionable. And he won the wager, for these tall black pillars are now quite *de rigueur* with the exquisites.

Your dear letter was as welcome and sweet as ever. My love to good Aunt Kroecher and thank her for her affectionate interest in my life and doings here. We are expecting the return of the troops from Egypt very shortly; there will, no doubt, be many military fêtes in consequence. Adieu for today, dear heart. My love to your husband and sweet Phillinchen.

CHAPTER XXI.

NINTH LETTER.

PARIS, 22d Nivose XI.

The week that has passed since I last wrote to you, dearest, has brought me one step nearer to the end I have in view. I have great hopes of being able to present myself to you soon as the *châtelaine* of Mont Courtot and Retrazet. Still, I may yet find myself disappointed, in spite of the favourable aspect of affairs. I will not set my mind upon it too soon.

I wrote you that my friends here proposed various ways of my obtaining an audience with Madame Josephine, and as one of these plans led me also to Talleyrand, I determined to make a beginning with him as soon as he returned from Lunéville. I felt less shy in addressing myself first to this famous statesman because, during my childhood and while he was still Bishop of Autun, he had frequently been the guest of my dear parents. In fact, for some reason or other, he took a great fancy to me, and used always to bring toys for me, so that my dear mother would tease me about the evident fondness of the ugly old man whom I could not bear. And now I was going to him as a suppliant! However, as many of my acquaintances assured me that he made a very good business out of this restitution of property, I too re-

garded the matter more from the practical than the sentimental point of view.

At the Marquise d'Assas the other day somebody told a story illustrating his venality.

It seems that the great water-works at Marly which during the last century had cost millions to set up and keep in order, had fallen into such a state of dilapidation that a thorough restoration of the machinery had become imperatively necessary.

A Versailles without fountains was, of course, inconceivable; moreover, the First Consul had expressed his intention of using the palace as another official residence; so the business firms were called upon in all haste to submit their plans, and a Company, with the famous Montgolfier at its head, offered to supply, in the shortest possible time, entirely new machinery, which should also bring a larger volume of water into play. And for all remuneration they only asked for the material of the old machinery.

But Montgolfier, never dreaming that an offer so brilliantly advantageous to the Government would require Talleyrand's patronage, omitted to buy over that statesman, with the result that his offer was refused.

Other machinery was then put in, at a cost of three million francs, and proved itself later to be almost worthless. This circumstance was, however, of minor importance; Monsieur Talleyrand had his 100,000 francs "commission" safely in his pocket and that was all that mattered! And that is the way many a large fortune is made just now—Talleyrand's is already computed at twenty million francs.

The man is as cunning as a fox and as slippery as an eel—there is no getting hold of him. He gave proof of that when

he, the *ci-devant* Bishop, induced the Pope to give him a dispensation, whereby he was free to marry this Madame Grant, and after all his sins against the Church, too. There is every reason to believe that he made the recall of the priests dependent on this dispensation.

They say that his influence with the First Consul is daily becoming greater, and though Bonaparte hates him, he cannot do without him.

The Prince de Poix showed us a caricature the other day representing Talleyrand with his club foot holding Bonaparte by both hands and making him dance, while Cardinal Caprara, who is very influential here too, stands grinning by and plays the fiddle.

This open ridicule of public personages, which was the first sign of the Revolution, is coming up again; I trust, however, with less serious results.

Having given you a slight sketch of Talleyrand's public character, let me go on to describe my visit to him two days ago. I was decidedly nervous about this first meeting with him, Edmée having heard that his manner towards ladies was, if anything, worse than Bonaparte's. However, thank Heaven, things turned out better than I could have hoped for.

I was ushered into a sumptuously furnished salon by a lacquey in a richly laced coat, who handed me over to a gentleman-in-waiting, who proceeded to announce me to the Minister. Immediately afterwards the door opened and the "Marquis citoyen," as he calls himself, entered *en petite tenue*, namely, a blue coat with gold-embroidered collar and revers, a lace jabot and white *pantalons en escarpins*. But in spite of this becoming uniform he looked positively hideous, and I

could hardly repress a shudder as I faced him. It was not so much his ghastly pallor and staring fishy eyes, his turned-up nose and enormous, long-lipped mouth, not even his misshapen feet, one of which he dragged behind him as he walked, that disgusted and terrified me—it was his appalling likeness to the monster Robespierre. It made my flesh creep—they might have been twin-brothers.

It is hardly possible that the observant Minister should not have noticed my start of horror, but a marble statue could not have remained more unmoved. Whether this immobility of feature is his by nature or an acquired mask I know not—perhaps he is aware of the peculiar impression he makes upon strangers—at any rate, he let no sign escape him and advanced towards me with a friendly outstretched hand.

Oh Annaliebe, I cannot describe to you what I felt as I timidly laid my fingers in that cold and clammy hand! The thought of all the evil he had wrought upon my beloved Royal House came over me in a rush!

"Well, mademoiselle, and so you are safe back in your own country again—you poor little lady," he began. "I was sincerely delighted to hear of your escape and only regretted that I was out of the country at the time and could not be of assistance to you. But why did you and your Princess not stay quietly in England where you were out of harm's way?"

The tone of his voice was harsh and rasping and without the slightest modulation, and yet there was undeniably a certain kindliness in his words.

What could I answer to his last question? Tell him what I more than suspected of Philippe Egalité's share in the matter? To what end? How would it serve me? The villain

had paid the price of his crimes, had long since received his just reward.

So I merely replied that we had felt it impossible to desert the Queen in her hour of peril.

A horrid, half-mocking smile passed over the Minister's cold features at these words and he murmured to himself, "*Il y a donc des singulières!*"—"What extraordinary sentiments you women do indulge in, to be sure!" he went on. "The Queen's case was hopeless, you could not possibly have saved her; of what use then could it be to Marie Antoinette that you two should come back to certain death?"

What did this egoist know of devoted love; of the love that will ever sacrifice its own good to that of the friend; how could he understand the solace we derived from offering our poor services to the Royal sufferer? I could only falter, "These are questions of feeling, Monseigneur, about which it is useless to argue."

He then went on to ask about my personal circumstances and my parents. He alluded to the by-gone days in which he had known me as a child, and it seemed to me that with the recollection of that time another expression came upon his hard face and there was quite an affectionate warmth in the tone in which he murmured, "Yes—yes—they were dear good people!"

He made me tell him where I had been all these years and the manner of my escape from death—he had never heard the details. "Ah, my little friend," he went on, "I pitied you with all my heart and have often thought of the little girl I used to dance upon my knee."

I can assure you, Annaliebe, I was struck dumb with astonishment, I could not believe my ears. Could this be the

same man who had spoken so cynically just now? The half-closed eyes had a totally different expression; he looked at me almost tenderly and held out his hand. When I came to the scene of my rescue by Hector the pangs of memory were too much for me and I burst into tears. "Poor girl, what have you not had to go through," he said, laying his hand kindly on my shoulder, "to be saved from death as by a miracle and then to lose your lover immediately afterwards—poor little Cecile, that was indeed hard!"

"So Hector de Trellissac was your fiancé's name?" he went on after a pause. "Are there any more Trellissacs?" I told him no, that Hector was the last of his line. "Where can I have heard that name?" he pondered with a shake of the head. "It must have been in the old days, I suppose."

You may imagine what I felt at these words, Annaliebe. For one instant a dazzling, heavenly hope flashed through my mind. But it was madness—I had seen my lover's head covered with blood, I had seen him die, there was no lingering possibility of doubt or hope.

Burying my face in my hands, I burst into tears and gave way utterly under the pain these memories reawakened in my heart.

At this Talleyrand laid a hand gently on my shoulder. "Do not cry like that, my poor girl," he entreated, "I cannot bear to see it; and pray forgive me for having grieved you thus by my questions."

I did my utmost to control myself, and presently he took my hand reassuringly and asked: "Now tell me how I can be of service to you? I gather from your letter that you have a definite object in coming here—the restitution of your

family property, no doubt? Are there any others of your name?"

Drying my tears, I answered falteringly that I had a young cousin, Camille de Courtot, attached to the Embassy in Brussels.

"Well, my little friend," he resumed, "I will do all for you that lies in my power, but I think it advisable that you should enlist Madame Josephine's sympathies—for the moment, I am almost powerless, my mediation would do you more harm than good, I fear, as I am on the First Consul's black books. Stay—I will give you a letter of introduction to the Marquis de Coulaincourt, who has just entered upon his duties as Master of the Household to Madame Bonaparte and who will soon procure you an audience with that lady. Never fear, you shall have your property restored to you—I will take care of that. You will doubtless have observed, Mademoiselle," he continued and his cynical smile returned, "that things have changed considerably since you were here. Surely you knew something of our fair Queen-Consul in former days? Ah—of course. Well, do not fail to establish yourself in the good graces of this all-powerful woman, there is hardly anything impossible to her just now!"

"The Marquis is Master of the Household to Madame Josephine?" I cried in astonishment.

Talleyrand laughed aloud. "What, *another* aristocrat! you will say. But mark my words: every one of them will come round in time. Coulaincourt, however, has a certain excuse for accepting a post near Madame, for, if you remember, the lady was long undecided whether, of her many wooers, Coulaincourt was not preferable to the much older Beauharnais. And now instead of being her husband he has be-

come Master of her Household. Well, well—I tell you they will all come by and by. Why, only the other day the Larochefoucauld offered herself as *dame d'atour*. You would never believe from what quarters petitions pour in on the Consul nearly every day. Between ourselves, the Bourbon Princes are drawing settled incomes from him, even the so-called Louis XVIII., at present in England, petitioned Bonaparte a little while ago to help him to the Throne. But, though Madame Josephine implored her husband on her knees to restore the Bourbons, Bonaparte seems to have no leanings towards the part of King-Maker. If *he* makes anybody into a King it will be himself and no one else in the world, you may be sure. But pray regard these confidences as strictly between ourselves.—By the way, Mademoiselle, should Madame Josephine procure you an audience with the First Consul, stand up to him fearlessly and prefer your request in as few words as possible, he does not like long speeches. However, should he ask you if you would like to enter Madame's Household, give him an evasive answer—say for instance that the last male member of the family is already in the service of the State.—Of course if you liked to accept the post you would be welcomed with open arms. You can think it over.—Now, I think that is all the advice I can offer you. Keep up your spirits, all will go well, I hope. If you will take the trouble to go to the Marquise for a few moments I will bring the letter of recommendation to you there."

The Minister herewith brought his long speech to a close and held out his hand. I thanked him warmly for his kindness, curtseyed low and retired, the gentleman-in-waiting conducting me to the apartments of Madame la Marquise.

As you may imagine, I did not anticipate much pleasure

from this visit. The little, corpulent, very common-looking lady received me graciously, her flabby old face thickly plastered with red and white paint, and short as my visit was, I had ample time to convince myself of her extremely limited capacities. She has the manners of a *bourgeoise* from the provinces, and once more I had a glaring proof of the strange fact that the cleverest men often fall into the hands of the stupidest, ugliest women. I wonder why it should be so? I believe that with most men, and old ones in particular, it is a question of habit. And so it is with Talleyrand probably. The woman thoroughly understood his peculiarities and his tastes, indeed to the extent—so Monsieur de Volnay said maliciously the other evening—of affording the old roué opportunities of meeting ladies in her salons with whom he could satisfy his taste for a little change of company. Hence her influence over the otherwise astute man.

And for all that, you cannot help being surprised that this keen-witted schemer should have braved the Papal thunders for *such* a woman!

To my relief, my tête-à-tête with the lady did not last very long. The Minister soon appeared and handed me the promised letter, whereupon I took leave of the strangely assorted couple.

This letter, my dear Annaliebe, you may well label "The Talleyrand," for it deals almost exclusively with him. But you take such a sympathetic interest in all that concerns me and my affairs, that I knew you would like to know the details of this first important step towards gaining my object.

I shall send in my letter of recommendation to-day to Coulaincourt in his new character of Master of the Household, accompanied by a request for the honour of an audience

with Madame Josephine, and then await further developments. One thing I look forward to with malicious joy, if I do have an audience, and that is Monsieur le Marquis' face when he has to introduce me to his mistress.

Oh, it is a queer world, Annaliebe, and I often feel as if my former life here was only a dream. A dream that I was ever a Lady-in-waiting at the Tuileries, a dream that other princes ever ruled here, and, finally, a cruel dream of all I once suffered in this city. At times, even, I begin to doubt if this is the same people I lived among nine years ago—it seems like another race altogether.

Farewell, my soul's beloved, I will write the moment anything fresh occurs.

My faithful love to you and yours.

P.S.—Should you chance to meet any one from Berlin, please find out more for me about the Luchesinis; it would interest me to hear further details of the curious pair.

Part of Talleyrand's enormous fortune found its way later into Prussia, when Duke Edmond de Talleyrand married the Princess of Kurland and Sagan and so acquired the Dukedom of Sagan. His sons, the Dukes of Valencay and of Dino have settled in Silesia, where they have considerable landed property.

CHAPTER XXII.

TENTH LETTER.

PARIS, 28th Nivose XI.

My darling Annaliebe:

"L'homme propose mais Dieu dispose."—My audience with Madame Josephine has fallen through for the present. But I must tell you the whole story.

I sent in my letter of recommendation to the Marquis in all due form and received an answer, on the next day but one, informing me that Her Excellency Madame Bonaparte would be pleased to receive Mademoiselle de Courtot at 12 o'clock on the 16th inst. at the Palais de Malmaison. There were only three days till then, so you may imagine that I was in a great state of nervousness as to whether I could make myself sufficiently fine, in that short space, to present myself before so critical a feminine judge as the elegant Josephine.

Edmée threw herself into the breach, and we instantly set out for the celebrated Magazin de Modes of Messieurs Déspreaux and Leroi, where we bought some lovely dress material of a colour called "gorge de pigeon." Then to Josephine's own Court dressmaker, Madame Germon, who actually sent me home the dress in two days' time!

I enclose the fashion-plate on which the costume was modelled, so that you may have some idea of how your Cecile

will look on the important occasion. I shall wear a jabot of Flemish lace fastened on the bosom with a diamond clasp, which Edmée will kindly lend me. My hair will be dressed *à l'antique* by the renowned Monsieur Duplan, with the addition of an enamel and diamond coronet, also out of Edmée's jewel-box, and a great ostrich plume at the left side. You know, dearest, that I never wear anything but black and of the simplest design; so you may imagine how strange I felt when I first tried on this fashionable garment with the waist up under my arms and its long train. Nevertheless—now, do not laugh at your old friend—I was not ill-pleased at my appearance. The chignon of airy curls gathered high at the back will quite suit me, I think, and Edmée declares flatteringly that I shall look ten years younger.

You must be surprised, my Annaliebe, that I still write of this interview in the future tense, but, at the last moment, my audience had to be deferred indefinitely.

On the day before the appointed date, Coulaincourt sent me word that Madame had met with a slight accident and therefore could not receive me.

It appears that Madame Josephine was visiting a friend of hers, a Madame de Campis, at Plombières. Several other ladies, Madame Savary, I think, for one, were there, and while sitting in the drawing-room one of them happened to notice a charming little English terrier in the street below. Josephine, who is very fond of animals, went on to the balcony with her hostess to look at the dog, but hardly had they set foot on it than the balcony broke and precipitated both ladies into the street. Madame de Campis fractured her hip, but Josephine escaped with a few slight wounds on her hands and arms—mere scratches—but she is in bed, suffering from nervous

shock, and no wonder. The First Consul is said to have been much alarmed and upset and put off his journey to Lyons for several days in consequence. And that is why my audience could not take place. I am very glad, however, that the lady—who seems to be deservedly popular—came off with such slight injury. It might have been a very ugly accident.

It seems to me the nation cannot make enough of its Bonaparte. Every week you find the statuesque head—on which, as Lebrun sang the other night at the Opera, the Peace of the World is founded—reproduced in some new style, sometimes uglier, sometimes handsomer than the original. From the reticules of the ladies it has now passed to the newly invented paper fans. Of all the portraits I have seen as yet, that by David seems to me the most noteworthy. I send you herewith a little copy, which is to be had now in all the shops. Latterly, too, another new medal was struck on which he is associated with the other two Consuls in the style called, in numismatics, "capita jugata," but with this peculiarity, that whereas the other two heads are merely indicated, his is surrounded by a nimbus of rays. Beneath is an allegorical group and the words, "Peace and Plenty under the Consul's rule have recalled Art and Science."

Apropos of numismatics I must tell you a story Madame de Guiche told us, demonstrating how little artistic sense the First Consul possesses. New five-franc pieces were to be issued, and it was necessary that Bonaparte should come to the Mint to decide upon the portrait to be used for the stamp. The Director of the Musées and the Mint, Monsieur Denon, a *littérateur* (he wrote a description of Napoleon's wonderful campaign in Egypt) eminently suited to the post, ordered the head man of the department, Magnier, to prepare a portrait

of the Consul in a few days, so that when he appeared in the Mint he might have the pleasure of seeing the coins struck on the spot.

Magnier declined to do this, saying the time was too short to prepare a work of real artistic value, and that the Consul would have to sit to him for the portrait.

Monsieur Denon persisting in his demand, however, a subordinate named Thierry, a clever but superficial workman, offered to carry out the order so that the coins should be stamped in the actual presence of the Consul; and accordingly the matter was entrusted to him.

On the appointed day Bonaparte appeared in the Mint with a numerous following. The moment he entered the machine room the wheels were set in motion, the stamping began, and shortly afterwards Monsieur Denon was able to hand to the Consul the first of the new five-franc pieces stamped with a tolerably successful Bonaparte head. The Consul expressed himself as entirely satisfied and gave the order on the spot for the two million five-franc pieces.

Properly speaking, the Consul has no right whatever to issue such an order on his own account, the sanction of the entire *corps législatif* being necessary, but it is an open secret that this body has become a mere cipher in Bonaparte's hands, and he acts as autocratically as he pleases.

But there was a sequel to the story.—The two million coins were duly struck and ready for issue in ten days, but alas, Monsieur Denon and his spirited young colleague had forgotten, in the hurry of the moment, that these five-franc pieces were not medals but the ordinary coin of commerce, and had made the stamp in such high relief that the coins could not be laid on the top of one another, and were thus totally unfit for

business purposes. So there was nothing for it but to consign the whole two millions once more to the melting-pot and have them re-struck, whereby the deeply offended Magnier got his rights; but the whole affair cost a great deal of money and the First Consul had to suffer much annoyance at the hands of the ever watchful caricaturists.

For painting, too, the Consul seems to have little appreciation, never giving any commissions but for his own portrait—David's extraordinary picture of the General prancing up the St. Bernhard on a dapple-grey charger had to be copied several times. The only branch of Art he has any real taste for is the tragic drama, more especially when acted by his favourite Talma. I will tell you more about this actor after I have seen him, which will happen before long, I think. He is expected back shortly from Italy, where he has been spending three months for the good of his overworked voice.

The Carnival time has been particularly uproarious and gay this year. When we drive out, the streets, especially the Rue Richelieu and Rue St. Honoré, are full of masks till late into the night. Plaster mice, confetti, and straw wreaths were thrown into our carriage and there were roars of inextinguishable laughter if anybody chanced to be hit. They say that the government has expended an enormous sum on promoting this apparently spontaneous display of festivity among the populace—it cost the police 30,000 francs on Mardi Gras alone for the masqueraders they provided. This plan of filling the streets with paid masks was entirely done away with under the last reigns; it seems a pity that the new régime should have to fall back on it again. A disagreeable intermezzo to this joyous Saturnalia has been furnished by the thunder-bolts launched by the Jupiter of the Tuileries against some of the

aristocrats who were foolhardy enough to express their disapproval of certain measures adopted by the present government. The Marquise de Champanetz, for instance, was given one hour to prepare for banishment to Antwerp, with the alternative of taking up her abode in the Temple. It quite carries one back to the days of the *lettres de cachet*. And this although the Marquise was one of the most universally popular ladies and quite at home in Josephine's set.

Since Peace was definitely concluded and people have become reassured as to the future, foreigners are streaming into Paris in extraordinary numbers, especially Germans, who readily obtain employment, being well known for their industry and trustworthiness. You cannot think how refreshing it is to me to hear the familiar accents of my adopted country once more—and to speak it too! I went into a glove shop the other day and at once divined the nationality of the blonde girl behind the counter. You should have seen how her blue eyes lit up when I addressed her in German. The constant intercourse between France and Germany during the long wars seems to have removed a good deal of mutual prejudice, and I hear that many people have begun to learn German in order to study the literature in the original, translations being as a rule but poor affairs. There are German reading parties, German clubs, even a German theatre up till a short time ago, but that has evidently come to grief, for when Edmée and I went there one evening we found that the Director, a Herr Haselmeier, had just vanished, leaving the poor company in the lurch.

There is no doubt too that French literature is beginning to bloom out again in the genial atmosphere after the long winter of the Revolution. Delille, Mason, and many others

have arisen to charm us with their writings, and the older poets, such as Racine, Corneille, Boileau, and Lafontaine are receiving fresh appreciation. It is to be hoped that this state of things will continue and soon obliterate all traces of the degrading effects of the Terror.

We consoled ourselves for our disappointment about the German theatre by going to the Place des Victoires to see the Aeronaut Garnerin go up with his wife in a balloon, a spectacle which was quite new to me. As we approached the Place we caught sight of the great air balloon floating about five feet above the heads of the assembled crowd. It was made of silk and ornamented with enormous initials—N. B.—in honour of the First Consul. Under it burned a fire of wood and straw which inflated it with warm air, till the balloon must inevitably have flown up into the sky had it not been restrained with ropes held by at least a hundred people. To the balloon was attached a great basket into which the bold aeronaut and his wife proceeded to climb. He then fired off a pistol as a signal for the people to let go the ropes, and the balloon mounted majestically into the air amid the deafening applause of the crowd. It was borne along on the current of wind at a height of about 500 feet and presently the aeronaut threw out a little dog attached to a parachute, the poor little creature landing, quite unhurt but as wet as if it had come out of the water, on the roof of a house, from whence it was rescued by a chimney-sweep. Meanwhile the balloon came down without any injury to itself or its daring occupants at Gonesse, on the other side of the Seine, but we heard afterwards that the frightened peasants, taking it for the work of the Devil, had torn it in a thousand pieces—a terrible pecuniary loss to its owner. I was very sorry for the poor aeronaut and trust he will soon be able

to replace it—they say the exhibition draws enormous crowds.

There, my Annaliebe, I have had another long, long gossip with you! Each day brings so many new sights and impressions that I could go on writing pages. I hope in my next letter to be able to tell you that I have seen Madame Josephine and so advanced another step in my affairs. And now, fare thee well, my darling—the best of greetings to all my dear friends and hearty congratulations to the Herr Candidatus on his engagement. May dear little Käthchen be very happy at his side and perhaps lighten his pedantry just the least little bit!

Toute à toi,

CECILE.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ELEVENTH LETTER.

PARIS, 16th Pluviose XI.
Palais Brancas.

My sweetest Friend:

This is going to be another of my long letters, for so much has happened to me in these last few days that I hardly know where to begin.

Well, my audience with the all-powerful Madame Josephine has taken place. Thank Heaven, I have that behind me!

On the 6th of February, I received notice that Madame would see me the next day at 12 in the Château de Malmaison. Accordingly I began my toilette early on the eventful day and am bound to confess that I was well pleased with the result when it was finished. Goodness knows, I had no idea of making conquests; on the other hand, I did not wish to appear in a pre-historic costume at this ultra new-fashioned Court, and so was glad that the various artists to whom I was indebted for my smart appearance had done their work so well.

Warmly ensconced in Edmée's carriage, I drove out through the bright wintry sunshine to Malmaison, reaching my destination a little before 12.

The Château and even the park surrounding it were much changed from what I remembered. I heard from Edmée that

Bonaparte found the beautiful property in a terribly dilapidated condition on his return from Egypt, and that Madame Josephine had incurred a mass of debt on it which her husband had to pay—over a million francs, I believe. However, he had both Château and park put in repair, and Madame displayed a very elegant taste in the laying out of the latter.

As I drove through the great avenue leading to the Château, I met a cavalcade composed of two young ladies and several gentlemen, in one of whom, to my intense astonishment, I recognised the Prince de Poix. Edmée's old manservant sitting beside the coachman replied, on my questioning him, that one of the ladies was the sister and the other the step-daughter of the First Consul.

Of course I looked then with increased interest at the two beautiful young creatures of whom I had heard so much, particularly since their marriage on the same day had created such a sensation:—Caroline Bonaparte's civil marriage with General Murat having received the sanction of the Church on the same day that Hortense Beauharnais was forced to marry the Consul's brother Louis. I will return to this later on and give you further details. One of the gentlemen, according to Baptiste, was General Murat himself, besides which I noticed Monsieur de l'Aigle, whom I was as much surprised to see here as the Prince de Poix. "Oh, oh, messieurs," I thought to myself, "how does this fit in with your remarks the other evening at Madame de Montesson's?"

But now my carriage emerged from the avenue, and the palace with its wide flight of steps lay before me. For the imposing household of the First Consul it looked to me decidedly inadequate; indeed, Madame Josephine said afterwards that she would only be there for a few weeks longer

and was then going into residence at St. Cloud. General Berthier would, in all probability, receive her beloved Malmaison; the Consul was said to have promised it to him.

I should think, however, that the real reason for the change is that Bonaparte has taken a dislike to the place since the attempt made on his life a short time ago. A snuff-box, almost exactly similar to the one used by the Consul, was placed upon his writing-table filled with poisoned snuff. Bonaparte, toying idly with it for some time, happened to look more closely at the figures on it and noticed some slight differences. The matter was at once investigated and the snuff discovered to be highly poisoned.

On alighting at the Château I was received by the *maître du palais*, who, on my presenting my card, conducted me to the Marquis de Coulaincourt. By him I was then ushered into a reception room with chairs stiffly ranged along the walls. Several ladies were seated here engaged in lively conversation, among whom, to my renewed surprise, I again found some old friends.

The first to hurry towards me was Madame de Campan. Mon Dieu, the things that had happened since I last saw the governess of the Royal children in the Temple! Was it conceivable that she should have forgotten it all and accepted a place in Madame Josephine's household? But the first words she whispered to me as she embraced me tearfully dispelled this thought. She told me that she had a girls' school in St. Germain-en-Laye in which Hortense Beauharnais had been educated, and that she had come to-day with some of Hortense's former schoolfellows to congratulate her on her marriage. These young ladies she proceeded to present to me—a most striking, dark-haired American, called Eliza

Murray, and two charming sisters, Adèle and Eglée Augnier. I also made the acquaintance of Madame Savary, the graceful Madame Junot, and Madame Hamelin, who, after Madame Tallien, is the most noted of our *Mervilleuses*. Edmée had already told me of her eccentric and ultra-modish toilettes, and to-day she wore an under-petticoat of white satin with a tunic of green silk crêpe trimmed with gold spangles and fringes, while a gold-embroidered green bandeau was wound through her hair. The costume was somewhat bizarre, but became her admirably. She is about thirty and in the full bloom of her beauty, with a pair of glowing dark eyes, a charming little mouth with rather full red lips, a complexion like ivory, with a delicate peachy flush on her cheeks. Her fair white brow is framed in naturally waving, unpowdered golden hair gathered into a Greek knot behind, from which the most fascinating little curls peep out inquisitively. I describe her to you so particularly because she is one of Madame Josephine's most intimate friends and has much influence over her.

And who was there besides? Four young ladies of whom I should never have believed it. The Marquis presented them to me under a decidedly peculiar title. "'Madame de Remusat," he said, "and Mesdemoiselles de Talhuët, de Lucai, and de Lauriston, four ladies appointed by the Consul to *assist Madame in doing the honours of the palace*."—I must say, I did not think to find Adèle Talhuët and Eglée Lucai here as Josephine's Maids of Honour—for of course that is the plain meaning of the ambiguous title—after all I heard at Madame de Montesson's.

And you should have heard the fluttering and whispering among the ladies when the Marquis pronounced my name!

From their manner I plainly read the question—"What is *she* doing here?—we thought she was long since dead." I felt a hundred years old, and could not but smile sadly as I realised what an enormous gap even nine short years can make in a life! However, I took my dear little god-daughter Adele Talhuët joyfully in my arms and welcomed Eglée Lucai as a daughter of my old friends. Both had grown up to be beautiful dark-eyed girls.

We then seated ourselves and waited.

Dear me, how little I thought, ten years ago, that I should ever sit waiting thus in Josephine Tacher's ante-chamber! Involuntarily I fell to dreaming of the past and recalled how surprised every one was at the little Creole's good fortune—there was already a good deal of gossip in circulation about her life before she came to Paris—in being chosen by the Marquis de Beauharnais for his wife. Their happiness was short-lived, however, and they had not been married five years when there were rumours of the Marquis divorcing his wife for her discreditable behaviour. In any case, they had lived apart a long time when the Marquis' fate overtook him and he was guillotined in company with the Prince of Salm-Kyrburg and that unfortunate Baron Trenk, whose romantic love story with Frederick the Great's sister Ulricke you once told me.—We none of us could discover from what source Madame Josephine derived her income afterwards. She spoke of a large inheritance in Martinique, but she lived in most indifferent circumstances. Edmée was telling me only a few days ago how she had met the lady at that time in the house of Claude de Beauharnais, Comte des Roches Baritaud, whose wife, when Josephine appeared in a marvellous robe of pale blue velvet,

had declared to Edmée that Josephine possessed five gala dresses but only two chemises.

The position of the beautiful Creole was, as you see, a very doubtful one under the old régime, and I am sure Bonaparte might have made a better match had he consented to unite himself with the aristocratic party in those days.

Be this as it may, his choice seems to have turned out well, for every one agrees in saying that her life now is quite without reproach, and whether he married her out of calculation or not, he certainly was madly in love with her afterwards.

I was awakened out of my dreams by a movement among the ladies, who now all stood up as the Marquis opened the door of an adjoining salon and entered it. There was a brief pause and then a knock on the parquet floor of the same room —yes, Annaliebe, just as in the old days of Royalty! The doors were then thrown open by two gentlemen-in-waiting in *petite tenue*, and preceded by the Marquis and followed by her cousin Madame de Valette and her son Eugène, Madame Josephine made her entry.

Let me say, *en passant*, that I have seldom seen a more pleasing and sympathetic face than that of this youth of twenty. He is remarkably handsome, very graceful and elegant in his movements, and has more the air of the *grand seigneur* of former times than the modern Incroyable.

I had withdrawn somewhat behind the other ladies in order to have a good look at the much talked of beauty, the all-powerful Madame Josephine, who could sometimes bend the iron will of the great Consul.

What, I thought, is there no such thing as Time the Destroyer? Have the years passed over her without leaving a single trace?—Standing there against the background of vio-

let velvet portière, she seemed to me the very same girl I had met years ago at the house of Talleyrand's cousin, Madame de Casaux.

Her waving chestnut hair may have become somewhat thinner with time, but who is to say now-a-days where nature leaves off and art begins? Her peculiar ivory-pale complexion, which I remembered of old, may have grown a little faded and yellow, but I was unable to judge, for the red and white was so artistically mingled and laid on that her skin was like lilies and roses. But the charming mouth, the bewitching, slightly *retroussé* nose, the almost night-black eyes with their long lashes and the glance that flashed out so strangely at times were unaltered; and her voice has a most enthralling sweetness. Her figure is, if anything, more beautiful than ever; she is slender and yet admirably round, and no tight lacing trammels the grace and freedom of her movements. Altogether, she reminds one in her languid exquisite grace of a full-blown rose—a rose that must ere long drop its petals.

I wish I could show you the portrait Edmée possesses of her, painted by Gérard;—the wanton, straying curls, the coquetry of the glance—it is herself with all her alluring faults and charming weaknesses. I hear that this picture is to be reproduced, and if so you shall have a copy, though the engraving unfortunately gives one no idea of the colouring.

But I had no more time to observe her, for she was approaching me. Before the Marquis could mention my name she hurried forward with outstretched hands—"Oh Cecile," she exclaimed, "can it be really you? Surely there was no need of all this formality before seeing one another? Why have you waited so long?—I expected you ever since I heard

of your arrival in Paris." And with that she drew me up from my deep curtsey by both hands.

I must own that I was completely won by her irresistible charm of voice and manner and responded in the same tone, and you know, my Annaliebe, that if I want to make myself very agreeable I generally succeed—at least, so you have often told me, you dear little flatterer.

Madame Josephine then drew me down beside her on a sofa and whispered rapidly—" You have come about the restitution of your family property, have you not? I will speak to Bonaparte about it. You need have no fear—it shall be arranged," and she took my hand in her small slender ones, on which the red marks of the recent wounds were still visible, and pressed it affectionately.

" Of course the decision lies in Bonaparte's hands," she continued when I tried to express my thanks. " He will wish to talk it over with you personally. I expect him back from Lyons very soon and will do all I can for you with the Consul. Yes, mesdames," she said, turning to the other ladies, " I was dreadfully anxious about the First Consul, especially as I could not accompany him this time as I invariably do. Lyons with its excitable, revolutionary elements was bad enough, but to have this crowd of Italian deputies added, who want to submit their list of possible presidents to Bonaparte's approval, frightened me, so that I have hardly closed my eyes the last few nights. However," she went on with a brilliant smile, " my fears were, thank Heaven, quite unfounded—once again *my star watched over Bonaparte.* I have just received news that the matter is successfully concluded. I am sure you will congratulate me, ladies, when I tell you that Bonaparte has accepted the Presidentship himself; he is now the Ruler—I mean

of course," she corrected herself hastily, "the head of the Cisalpine Republic as well as our own."

We all rose and offered her our congratulations in due form, and again I had good occasion to observe the tact and charm with which she said something pretty and appropriate to each lady in turn. She is really fascinating, and though now that I was quite close to her and realised how much of her charming appearance was due to art and a consummate knowledge of how to make the utmost of her waning beauty, I perfectly understood the glamour she exercises over the Consul and indeed every one with whom she comes in contact.

She was good enough to beg me to spend the rest of the day with her and sent one of her carriages at the same time for Edmée to join us. I must admit, dear Annaliebe, that I was by no means unwilling to stay—no one could withstand the extraordinary charm of this woman—and she promised us a treat in the shape of a delightful little play, "*Les fausses consultations*," to be acted that evening in her small private theatre by her two children and several friends.

We then repaired to an adjoining salon, decorated entirely in blue, and the ladies grouped themselves round Madame in front of a delightful, glowing fire, laughing and talking in the pleasant unrestrained manner that made me think of our never-to-be-forgotten *cercles* in the Petit-Trianon. Most of the ladies were busily employed with a kind of fancy work which was quite new to me. They had a quantity of real gold threads which they knotted and twined into all sorts of charming devices, such as chains and bracelets. The goldsmiths provided delicate clasps and fastenings expressly for this work, a little box full of them standing for general use on the table. These

clasps are of the most fragile filigree work in highly artistic designs.

Observing my interest in the work, Madame Josephine sent for a packet of gold thread and wove it rapidly with her clever little fingers into this dainty bracelet which I have much pleasure in passing on to you, dearest, as a memento of a very important day in your friend's life.

Looking round upon the company, I could not help thinking of the old ladies at Madame de Montesson's and wondered what they would say if they saw me sitting here. And then I recalled Talleyrand's prophecy: "You will see—they will all come—all." And after all, why should they not? Do I lower myself in any way when I accept my family possessions again from the hand that struck down the wretches who tore it from me?

Nor can my fidelity to my beloved Royal House be in any degree diminished by my associating now with those who dragged my country out of the moral slough into which it had sunk, and raised it to a position which excites the wonder and envy of the whole world.

I make this little declaration now, dear heart, lest you should think me fickle and disloyal. But you will have noticed that with each letter my admiration for the man who has evolved a new world out of chaos increases. I still cannot grasp how this foreigner, this Corsican, has managed to cast such a glamour over this nation of mine, otherwise so jealous of its rights. Well, I suppose it is because he follows the old plan of giving them "*panem et circenses*," and that goes a very long way here.

Please be so kind as to read my quotation very particularly to the Herr Doctor Vultejus, that he may see how little I have

forgotten of what he taught me. I trust he will accord me due appreciation.

But to return to our *cercle*. I had to give Madame Josephine many details of my life in Prussia. You would not believe how well informed she is on the subject of your country, and as to Queen Luise, she spoke of her with positive enthusiasm.

It interested me very much to observe how rapidly things are drifting on towards a Monarchy. Madame Hamelin told me of an incident in the Italian wars which was new to me, illustrating this tendency very vividly. When, on the conclusion of peace, the Milan ecclesiastics asked the General how he wished to be received on his entry into the city, he replied: "come Imperatore." And this was five years ago! A fond, proud smile lit up Josephine's features at this anecdote; she said nothing, but her eyes beamed as if she already saw the crown upon her husband's head. I expect she is well aware of his plans for the future.

Altogether, she shows a remarkable knowledge of human nature and has the most skilful—though perfectly graceful—knack of drawing out her companions. Madame de Campan whispered to me that one must be careful what one said before her, as Madame Josephine was fond of entertaining the Consul with any anecdote or little scandal she could gather from the conversation around her.

Presently the famous painter Isabey was announced, and I was not a little interested to meet this favourite artist. He is a man of about thirty, with an intellectual and handsome face and very engaging manners. He regretted not seeing Madame Murat and Madame Hortense, with whom he daily plays a game of "jeu des barres."

Meanwhile it was time for the *Déjeuner*, and several of the ladies took their leave. Madame de Campan remained, however, with her pupils, also Madame Hamelin, the four *dames d'atour*, Eugène Beauharnais, and Isabey, whom Madame Josephine invited to share the meal.

I took advantage of the departure of the other ladies to have a little conversation with Adèle Talhuët and to ask after her parents. Poor little Adèle, who with her soft dark eyes and glowing tints looks the thoroughbred Vendéenne she is, told me her sad story, and how she, a daughter of the Chouans, came to be in the service of the Consul's wife. Pressing fondly to my side she told me how her old father, like mine, had fallen a victim to the Terror and her mother had remained for a long time in hiding with relations in the Vendée. When the frightful conflict between the Vendéans and the Government troops under Bernadotte broke out, Madame Talhuët fled with her daughter to Holland, where she lived for some years in great penury, supporting them both by the labour of her hands. On Bonaparte's appointment to be First Consul, she returned to Paris and made all sorts of attempts to earn money, but without success—things seemed only to go from bad to worse. At length, she turned in despair to Madame Lætitia, Bonaparte's mother, who procured her an audience of the First Consul.

This interview chanced to take place on the day following the attempt on Bonaparte's life with the infernal machine. The First Consul received Madame Talhuët in the presence of the Minister of Police, Fouché. As she stood trembling before the all-powerful Consul, trying to find words in which to express her humble petition, she suddenly had the happy inspiration to congratulate the General on his fortunate escape. The Consul smiled kindly, and then turning to Fouché said,

in his brusquest manner—"What do you say to that? Madame is an aristocrat; she belongs to one of the highest families of the Vendée, and yet she offers me her congratulations on my deliverance from death. Spare me, in future, these everlasting insinuations against the Vendéans, who have absolutely nothing left to them but their firm loyalty to their King, for whom they fight like heroes. You will find no hole-and-corner assassins amongst them. It is your Jacobins who are the traitors, the skulking murderers, and not the Vendéans!"

The Consul then granted Madame de Talhuët a pension and placed Adèle in Madame Josephine's Household with a salary of 8000 francs. This, she said, enabled her to assist her dear mother as well, and she was sincerely grateful to Bonaparte. Madame Josephine, too, was extremely kind to her.

So you see, dear Annaliebe, this strange man seems to have a heart in his breast, after all.

Adèle's story of the misery she and her mother endured in exile, and indeed most of the accounts I hear of the emigrants, poor things, makes me more and more thankful for my inexpressible good fortune in falling into the hands of such true and tender friends as you, my dear ones. How can I ever repay you for the great gift of happiness you bestowed upon me!

And now, my sweetest Annaliebe, I must close this voluminous epistle or I shall never be able to send it off at all. I will reserve the rest of my description of my day at Malmaison for my next letter. Adieu, dearest heart.

Ever in undying affection

Your Cecile.

The Château of Malmaison was last year put up for auction in a state of utter dilapidation. Bought by Napoleon in 1789 for 100,000 francs, it was not presented to General Berthier, as the foregoing letter states, but remained in Josephine's possession as a sort of dower-house. After her death it went to her son, Duke Eugène Beauharnais, and on his demise was bought by a Swedish banker for 250,000 francs. Queen Christine of Spain acquired the Château in 1842, from whom Napoleon III. bought it for the sum of 1,500,000 francs and presented it to the Empress Eugénie. It was partially destroyed during the siege of 1870 and now, divided into thirty lots, sold by auction. Sic transit gloria mundi!

The promised portrait of the Empress Josephine, as also the filigree bracelet made by her, were among the possessions of my great-grandmother. Both were left by her will to the sister of my grandfather von Lüderitz (husband of Philippine von Alvensleben). I do not know if they are still in existence.

CHAPTER XXIV.

TWELFTH LETTER.

PARIS, 2d Ventose XI.

My beloved Annaliebe:

I have let a week pass before continuing my account of my day at Malmaison, and I have seen and done much that is interesting and worth telling you in between, so I will begin at once before my material gets beyond all due limits.

I think I left off in my last just where we were going in to the *déjeuner*. We went standing about in groups, when the lacqueys suddenly threw open the great folding doors and two ladies entered whom I at once recognised as the fair riders I had seen in the avenue. Madame Hortense at once flew to her mother and embraced her tenderly and then greeted us with a pleasant bow. Josephine then presented me to both ladies, who each had a little graceful remark for me.

As you may imagine, it was to Madame Hortense that my sympathies were more especially drawn, and her beauty and charm attracted me from the first. She has her mother's delicate, *spirituelle* features, only that the aquiline nose, night-black eyes and dark hair give the face a different character. She has a great air of distinction which, with the aquiline nose and classically rounded chin, she probably inherits from her father's side.

But on her sweet young face there lay a shadow of gentle uncomplaining melancholy which probably is to be traced to her compulsory union with Louis Bonaparte, for whom, they say, she always felt an invincible dislike.

Of course there are numerous stories in circulation as to the reason. According to one, her regard for her stepfather, the First Consul, amounts to positive idolatry, and there is no doubt that he is most fondly attached to her and that great sympathy exists between them, but that the feeling—on either side—exceeds the proper limits of their relationship is, from what Edmée tells me, a malicious invention spread abroad by a few persons in high position who ought to know better.

Another and certainly more probable story is that she has for years been deeply in love with General Duroc, Bonaparte's adjutant. The handsome officer is said to have returned the feeling, but whether he fancied it was hopeless to aspire to the hand of the First Consul's daughter, or whether, as Bonaparte's favourite officer, he looked still higher, suffice it to say he waited and waited till finally Bonaparte gave Hortense to his brother Louis. What the Consul's reasons were for this unequal union it would be difficult to understand, for he must have known them both well enough to be aware of their entire lack of compatibility.

Louis Bonaparte is said to be clever and by far the best educated of the brothers and, when he likes, both kind-hearted and of pleasing address, but the fatigues and hardships of his military campaigns added to his many *débauches* have ruined his health and made him of a melancholy, not to say hypochondriacal, turn of mind, in strong contrast to Hortense's lively temperament.

Her very natural distaste for him led, in the first weeks of their marriage, to some highly conspicuous passages between them, and Hortense is even reported to have fled from her husband one night and taken refuge with the Consul in the Tuileries, and it was only by using the utmost severity that Bonaparte finally induced her to return. Nevertheless, the relations between the couple continue to be of the worst, and Hortense has now been living for weeks past with her mother in Malmaison.

Bonaparte's youngest sister, Maria Annunciata Caroline, has been the wife of General Murat for two years, but, owing to the unsettled state of ecclesiastical affairs, had never received the sanction of the Church. At Hortense's very quiet marriage in the chapel of the Palace, the Consul determined to let his sister share the priestly blessing, and Cardinal Caprara performed both ceremonies on the same day. On this occasion Bonaparte is said to have remarked to the Cardinal that this was the last *private* religious ceremony which should be performed in his family, he should very soon witness some splendid public ones! I wonder if he meant his own re-marriage to Josephine? It is impossible to say; but there is no doubt that he is taking steps to restore the Church to its legitimate position in the State.

Madame Murat, who is barely twenty, has the faultlessly regular features of a classical statue and a lovely bright complexion, and is as gay and lively as poor Hortense is the reverse. Both ladies were still in riding dress with redingotes of black cassimere opening over red silk vests and carried their large felt hats in their hands.

Their cavaliers, having meanwhile changed their riding costumes, now entered, and you should have seen the Prince

de Poix's droll, astonished face when he caught sight of me—his surprise at my presence here was quite as great as mine on first seeing him. However, we only exchanged an amused smile and kept our thoughts to ourselves.

On presenting me, Madame Josephine added the somewhat astonishing remark, *une vieille amie à moi.* We then repaired to a large oval dining-room, decorated and furnished in the very latest style, where the déjeuner was served. Behind each chair stood a lacquey in magnificent green and gold livery. Madame Josephine was pleased to appoint me a seat at her left hand; General Murat sat on her right and Madame Hortense beside him. Next to me sat Madame Murat, and the Prince de Poix was at Hortense's other side. Thus I had General Murat for my vis-à-vis and had a good opportunity for observing this famous warrior. He is about thirty-five, and deserves the popular epithet of "*le beau Murat*" in so far as regular features, a red and white complexion, flashing black eyes, and bushy whiskers entitle a man to be so described. But do you know whom he reminded me of ? The agent for the wine-merchant in Mainz who came once a year to Kalbe and always amused us so much with his would-be elegant manners. I took a dislike to Murat from the first moment. He cannot conceal his low origin, and was formerly so frenzied a Republican that he altered his name to that of Marat, his more than questionable ideal, and came to the fore and was made a General during the Terror. With his sharp eye for the main chance, he soon attached himself to Bonaparte's rising fortunes, and has undoubtedly served him well and given frequent proof of courage and resourcefulness. He has accompanied Bonaparte on all his campaigns, and was mainly instrumental in dispersing the Council of the Five Hundred. In

short, he is one of the most faithful followers of his great brother-in-law, and may be said to have helped him to his present position.

Not that he has omitted to help himself at the same time. Edmée says that as Governor of Milan he amassed a fortune of many millions of francs. He and his lovely wife inhabit a magnificent palace and live in princely style. No doubt he has a great future before him, but he strikes me as an irretrievable egoist, and in his shifty eyes, which never look you straight in the face, duplicity is written in plain characters.

His costume was almost grotesque in its extravagance, and I remembered how the Prince de Poix had alluded to him one evening "*tout ce qu'il y-a du plus Franconi.*" And that is just what he looked like—a circus-rider. He wore a short, black, heavily braided Polish jacket, red trousers, and high boots of yellow leather, while his jet-black hair hung in ringlets over a white embroidered collar.

Then you should have seen his self-satisfied airs and the boastful manner in which he spoke of his military prowess till, had I not been incontestably assured of his great merit as a soldier, I should certainly have taken him for an unmitigated *fanfaron.* Nor does the fair Madame Caroline seem wholly blind to her husband's failings, for I noticed that while he told his self-glorifying stories she shrugged her classical shoulders disdainfully and a supercilious smile played round her beautiful lips.

What with the Prince de Poix's wicked face opposite and the glances he threw at me from time to time, I could scarcely restrain my laughter, and admired Josephine greatly for the tactful patience she exercised towards her bombastic brother-in-law.

Hortense took little or no part in the conversation and sat for the most part with dreaming eyes fixed on the distance. Was she thinking of the handsome Duroc, I wondered?

There was a good deal of talk about the illness of General Leclerc, the husband of Bonaparte's eldest sister Pauline. He had been sent out, a little while ago, with an expedition to St. Domingo, where he seems to have concerned himself more with his own private advantages than those of the State. General Murat remarked that he expected his brother-in-law to return as the richest man in Europe; Branchi, the great real estate agent, had been with him (Murat) only yesterday and said that General Leclerc had commissioned him to buy property in the Dauphinée to the extent of six million francs. "If he dies now," he added with a cynical laugh, "our dear Pauline can buy herself an entire Princedom here in France; she certainly will have money enough and to spare."

You have no idea of the concentrated spite of his tone as he said this; one could see that he was simply devoured with envy of his brother-in-law's good luck!

The conversation then turned on the Consul's journey to Lyons, and various interesting remarks were made on the Constitution he had given his new Republic. Murat then proceeded to give the details of Bonaparte's election, by which he had become President over two Republics.—"I wonder," he added with a sarcastic smile," how long he will remain so?"

This, at last, seemed too much for Madame Josephine, and with a glance of disapproval at the General, she put an end to his indiscretions by rising from the table.

On our return to the salon we found my Edmée. She was most cordially received by Madame and the other ladies, and I

seized the first opportunity to give her a hurried outline of the promises made me by Josephine, which pleased her greatly.

The afternoon being bright and sunny, Madame proposed that we should take a little walk through the grounds, whereupon Edmée, Madame Hamelin, and I accompanied her, while the others went off to their "jeu de barres."

The paths in the beautiful park are kept as smooth and clean as a parquet floor, so I was relieved of all anxiety as to my fine train. We had strolled about the grounds for some time, Madame Josephine pointing out the various improvements she had made, and at last entered the broad avenue that leads to the plain of Ruël. Josephine was just telling me how much she regretted having to leave Malmaison, when she suddenly stopped and held up a silencing hand.

I looked at her in surprise. Profound silence reigned around us, only broken by the solemn strokes of the church bell in Ruël ringing for afternoon Mass.

"Do you hear those bells?" she whispered softly, and the whole expression of her face seemed to change, to become almost devotional. I could not understand why the tones of these simple village bells should make such an impression on her, especially as she had no great reputation for piety. "Do you hear them?" she repeated. "Those are Bonaparte's bells!"

"The Consul's bells?" I asked in surprise, thinking perhaps he had presented them to the church.

"Yes—you know he is so fond of the sound of bells, and I have stood here many times with him listening to them," she explained fondly. "They affect him so strangely," she went on, "that I can hardly understand it—sometimes even to tears—and he does not like me to break the spell by speaking. He is

quite vexed that I cannot feel the same about it as he. I fancy the bells remind him of his youthful days at Brienne, where he was so happy. Altogether, his spiritual side is a most peculiar one; he believes firmly in a supernatural world all about us, exercising its influence upon every human life."

The bells died away and we proceeded on our walk, but I was much struck by her words. Who would ever have credited this cold and impassionate man with such imaginative power and feeling?

We then returned to the Château, and while waiting in the drawing-room till it was time for the promised theatricals Lucian Bonaparte and his wife arrived. As you may imagine, I was immensely interested to meet this man, who is said to be the most crafty and astute of all Bonaparte's brothers. It was he, they tell me, who gave Napoleon the hint as to the most opportune moment at which to return from Egypt; he also played an important part in the *coup d'état* that followed.

I must confess, however, that I was greatly disappointed in his appearance. He bears a certain family likeness, of course, to the First Consul—it is the same antique Roman type—but with his short, squat figure and general air of living too well, he looks like a well-to-do corn dealer or small shopkeeper, and his common-looking, much-bejewelled wife forms a worthy pendant to him. He too is said to have amassed an enormous fortune, for the most part while he was ambassador in Madrid. It cannot be an easy task for Madame Josephine —who certainly looked like a princess beside this sister-in-law —to associate comfortably with these queer relations of her husband's, but so far as I could see she managed them all with the most perfect tact and seems to be on an excellent footing with them all.

The little comedy, in which Hortense and Eugène Beauharnais took the chief parts, could not have been better acted by the most skilled professionals and fully deserved the hearty applause it got. It was immediately followed by dinner, a somewhat noisy meal, at which Monsieur Lucian drank a great deal of wine, but also told us some very interesting stories of his stay in Madrid.

We took our leave at about 9 o'clock, Madame Josephine repeating her assurances to help in my affairs directly Bonaparte returned.

Thus ended my visit to Malmaison. The small events of the last few days I must defer till my next letter; this one has spun itself out to an unconscionable length, but I knew the subject would interest you particularly. My fondest love to you and yours.

CECILE.

The scene referred to by the Baroness, in which the unhappy Hortense fled, on the night of her marriage, to the Tuileries, as well as other stories maliciously spread abroad about her, may probably have given rise to the report that Hortense's son, Louis Napoleon, afterwards Emperor, was the son of the great Napoleon. There is absolutely nothing to justify this scandal, which is also emphatically refuted in the Memoirs of the valet Constant.

Bonaparte's adjutant Duroc had every opportunity of bitterly regretting not having secured Hortense Beauharnais' hand while there was yet time. Three years afterwards, when Hortense had long been Queen of Holland, he married the daughter of a wealthy Spanish banker, a Signora Hervas

d'Almenara, a capricious, scatter-brained little person, who led him a dreadful life.

On the death of General Leclerc Pauline Bonaparte married Prince Borghese, and taking her fabulous wealth to Italy led a life of the most extravagant luxury. Her classical beauty has been preserved to us in a statue by Canova, in which she is represented as Tizian's Venus Victrix reclining on a couch. The original is in the Villa Borghese in Rome, and a very good copy by Hesemann in the Museum in Hanover.

The Baroness's judgment of Murat is amply borne out by later history. Napoleon made him King of Naples, but he was the first to desert the Emperor when his fortunes waned and side with Napoleon's enemies in the hope of retaining his crown. His treachery met with its due reward, for being taken prisoner in the attempt to regain his lost kingdom, he was called before a Court Martial and shot.

A second glaring instance of ingratitude to Napoleon was furnished by General Bernadotte whom, partly for his old love, Desirée Clary's sake, he had heaped with benefits. He too betrayed and deserted his Emperor's cause, but, more fortunate than "le beau Murat," managed to retain his throne.

CHAPTER XXV.

THIRTEENTH LETTER.

PARIS, 12th Ventose XI.

My Annaliebe, I am really quite ashamed to think that my last two letters were full of nothing but my visit to Malmaison; but, in truth, one of my reasons for going so much into detail was that I was thinking of the circle of dear good friends to whom you tell me you read my epistles aloud.

I can see them all so plainly—the good Pastor puffing at his long pipe and listening so earnestly to your every word; Aunt Kroecher having a war of words with Uncle Briest over this or the other personage in my letter or some opinion brought forward by me. I can *see* Uncle Briest's disapproving shake of the head at any word of praise from me for the person or the actions of the First Consul, whom, you remember, he always called the "lawless son of the Revolution," and then the fierce clash of Aunt Kroecher's knitting needles as she turns upon her ancient foe with "But, Monsieur Briest, that last remark of yours was hardly tenable, I think." How often we have laughed to see her throw down the gauntlet and challenge Uncle to mortal combat over an opinion in which, not five minutes before, she had agreed with him entirely. What an endless pity that, when Aunt Kroecher became a widow, these two did not marry! They could neither of them ever

have complained of dulness, nor, on the other hand, would they have been the least unhappy, for, at the bottom of their hearts, these two delightful people are very fond of each other. Perhaps then the old name would not have come to end with Uncle—there would have been a son to carry it on.—Imagine, my dear, if you can, the child of these two opposite natures! But for Heaven's sake don't read this passage aloud—I should never get over the outcry it would cause.—I will put a mark against it so that you may be warned in time.

I would give anything to be able to see you all, to arrive suddenly in your midst instead of my letter. When, I wonder, shall I see you again, my dearest?—Not for some time yet, I fear; I must first await the result of my audience with the Consul. He is still away and seems to be occupying himself in Lyons with his Italian subjects, or rather their representatives, longer than Madame Josephine expected. And now they say he is going on to Toul from Lyons, and when he does return there will be first the re-establishment of the Church and then the many fêtes in connection with the confirmation of the Concordat, so that who knows when the great man will find a moment to spare for poor little me and my private petition?

Edmée takes care that time should not hang heavy on my hands, and arranges so many entertainments for me that I often long for the peace and quiet I used to enjoy with you. What will you say to your grave and retiring Cecile having been to a ball the other night?—as an onlooker only, of course. Edmée had not breathed a word of it and I had not the least idea of what was coming after the charming little *souper* at Madame de Fontenay's, where the amusing Prince de Poix was once more my neighbour, when the couples suddenly arranged themselves for the dance.

What a long, long time it is since I saw gay young couples such as these footing it so merrily! Besides, so much of it was quite new to me, so that I watched with additional interest.

The Polonaise, Française, and Minuet were danced, and an English country dance and Scotch reel as well, but how the Ländler or Swabian country dance, which even the least prudish of moralists could not but decry as utterly indecent, has found its way into this circle I fail to understand. Your German valse, my dear, does not make much headway here, the mamas taking exception at the attitude. So a compromise has been made by giving two ladies to each gentleman or two gentlemen to the lady, thus preventing the dangerous tête-à-tête and the unseemly arm about the waist! And mama is reassured. It is a pity that the all-prevailing Grecomania which has given us so many artistic improvements has not brought the pantomime dances, which are sometimes produced here on the stage, into society as well. For instance, in the Theatre Royal—as it is still called—the other evening we saw "Ariadne and Bacchus," a pantomime after Xenophon, in which the most exquisite dances occurred.

As we are on the subject of dancing I will add a word about the dresses. They are airier and more transparent than ever, and the long train shows no sign of diminished popularity, in spite of the mishaps that constantly occur at balls when they wind themselves in Laocoon folds about the legs of the gentlemen, with results which are better imagined than described.

The evening before last we saw the great Talma—his first appearance since his return from Italy—as Orestes in "Iphigenia in Tauris." The theatre was filled to the very last place, and it was fortunate that Edmée had taken our tickets in good time. I was of course looking forward with intense in-

terest to seeing this actor of whom I had heard so much, and was distinctly disappointed when he first came on the stage, for though his features are regular and of the antique Roman type, he is small and insignificant and his movements, in the beginning, very languid and uninteresting, doubtless as a result of his recent illness. However, as the play went on, he warmed to the part and soon exhibited a fire and passion which thrilled his audience to the marrow; in fact, he was so carried away by his emotional excitement that one almost feared for his health. Yet, in spite of his passion, his movements were so dignified and withal so entirely natural that involuntarily one seemed transported to the classical days of which the drama treated. It seemed incredible, watching his youthful fire and the elasticity of his movements, that the actor should be nearly sixty years old.

Edmée tells me that the Consul thinks very highly of him and is almost on terms of intimacy with him; also that Talma often gives him hints for his deportment in public.

Hearing Bonaparte spoken of on every occasion and wherever I go, it seems quite strange that I should have been here four months and yet never seen him properly,—for both in the theatre and at the parade he was too far away to afford me anything but an indistinct impression. You know, Annaliebe, that I am not precisely shy and that the presence of great people does not alarm me, but I must frankly confess that with Bonaparte's reputation for always acting as one least expects, I am decidedly nervous at the prospect of this audience.—Well, after all, he is not superhuman, and if he refuses my petition, he refuses, and there is an end of it. I shall have done all that lay in my power, and for my personal happiness Heaven knows I do not require more than I already possess.

After the theatre, in order to calm our excited nerves and bring ourselves back to the level of every-day life, we drove to Frascati's, a place of which Monsieur de l'Aigle had given me such a glowing account that I begged Edmée to take me some time. It stands on the site of the Rochefoucauld's former magnificent palace and is surrounded by a great garden illuminated by thousands of coloured lamps. We were lucky enough to chance upon Monsieur de l'Aigle as soon as we arrived, and he kindly did the honours. The ground-floor of the house, which has been built by a private individual, consists of a suite of ten or fifteen large rooms, all brilliantly lighted and decorated with garlands of flowers. Ice and *sorbet* only are sold here and are of the very best quality, of which we were able to judge for ourselves when our gallant cavalier took us out into the garden and had it brought to us there. The company becoming somewhat noisy as the night wore on, we very soon left and returned home.

In my day it would have been out of the question for ladies to be seen at a public resort of this kind, but, as I said before, great changes have occurred here which may, no doubt, be ascribed to the enormous influx of strangers, particularly of the English, into Paris.

You ask me with regard to the great luxury displayed here by the *élégantes* in their dress, if they are all so rich as to be able to pay for it. Edmée tells me that there certainly is a great increase of wealth, but the most extravagantly luxurious people are those who have succeeded in amassing fortunes as purveyors to the Army during the wars. Many, however, had managed to enrich themselves by the Revolution, and among these, I am sorry to say, Edmée mentioned several names belonging to the noblesse, who, while singing the

praises of Liberty, had taken every opportunity of increasing their fortunes at the expense of others more quixotically honest. Let me horrify you by giving you a list of Madame Tallien's yearly expenditure set down the other day by some ladies who know her intimately. I call it a deplorable evidence of the length fashionable folly will go:

365 head-dresses, capotes, and hats.....	5,000 frs.
2 Cachemire shawls.....	600 "
365 pr. shoes.....	600 "
250 pr. silk stockings.....	3,000 "
400 robes.	20,000 "
12 chemises.	300 "
Red and white face paint.....	150 "
2 veils.....	2,400 "
Corsets, wigs, reticules, umbrellas, fans, etc.	3,000 "
Essences, perfumes, elixirs.....	800 "
Bijoux and other ornaments.....	5,000 "
Furniture — Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Persian, Egyptian, Gothic.....	30,000 "
6 horses (2 for riding).....	10,000 "
Dancing master.....	3,000 "
One bed.....	15,000 "
Theatres, concerts, etc.....	10,000 "
Charity.	100 "
	108,950 frs.

"O vanitas vanitatum vanitas!" Eh, Dr. Vultejus? How can one woman possibly use all these things!

Ever, my dearest heart, your faithful

C.

This time, for once, the Baroness was wrong in her estimate of character. Talma was no more faithful to his Imperial

friend and patron than the others whom Napoleon benefited. When Napoleon was banished to Elba and Talma appeared before the new King Louis XVIII. in the Tuileries, he said with an air of servile flattery: "I greatly prefer a kind word from your Majesty to a pension from a Bonaparte!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

FOURTEENTH LETTER.

PARIS, 22d Ventose XI.

My own dear Annaliebe:

The great event is over! But before I give you any details let me at once relieve your mind by telling you that I have come off victorious—Mont-Courtot and Retrazet are mine once more, are settled on me *personally* by the First Consul's express command.

And now let me proceed to give you a full account of the extraordinary incidents that happened to me in the Tuileries yesterday—so extraordinary, that when I compare my position before the audience with that of to-day, I can scarcely believe it is not all a dream.

Last Friday came the order to present myself before the First Consul at midday yesterday in the Tuileries. Of course I found that many changes had taken place in the Royal palace since I was last there. The centre "Pavillon," built by Katherine de Medici and Henri IV., which connects the two wings of the palace, is now used as the *Salle des Maréchals*. The left wing contains the private apartments of the First Consul and Madame Josephine when they happen to be in residence here, and the right wing all the official rooms, the Council Chamber, the Chapel, the Theatre.

The Adjutants, the Préfet du Palais, and the Commandants of the Consular Guard are lodged in the former "Pavillon des enfants de France," looking on to the Rue de Rivoli.

I had to pass through a suite of rooms, the doors of each of which were opened for me by two lacqueys in green-and-gold-embroidered coats and black velvet knee-breeches. Arrived at the last salon, I was received by the newly appointed Chamberlain Monsieur de Remusat, who conducted me to the ante-chamber in which a number of persons of all conditions were already assembled. It was quite a pleasure to me when among that crowd of strange faces my eyes suddenly lighted on Talleyrand leaning negligently in one of the deep windows. A flash of recognition passed over his sallow face at sight of me, and he at once advanced towards me and whispered, "*Je vous félicite.*" I looked at him blankly. "Your petition will be granted," he explained in the same low tone, "for the Consul never receives any one whose petition he intends to refuse."

You may imagine my joy at this news! It inspired me with a certain confidence, and I felt myself braced for the coming ordeal.

On the stroke of 12, Monsieur de Remusat scratched on the door leading to the Consul's private cabinet and then entered. Shortly afterwards the door opened again and the Chamberlain called my name out. The fateful moment had arrived; I crossed the threshold and the doors swung to behind me.

The Consul was standing opposite the door in front of a great marble fireplace in which a fire burned brightly. Rising from my deep curtsey, to which he responded with a curt nod, I stood up straight and looked at him. Yes—it was the

Roman Imperator-head I knew so well from the pictures and coins, with strands of dark hair falling over the brow. The shape of the head alone, with its massive outline and firm square jaw, sufficed to warn one that here was no average man, and recalled the sculptured heroes of the classic age.

He wore the sumptuous consular uniform which, as the Prince de Poix told us the other day, he had devised on the pattern of one he saw belonging to his brother Joseph at Marfontaine. It consisted of a scarlet coat without revers and with a wide embroidery of golden leaves up each seam, unusually small gold epaulettes, a long waistcoat of white cachemire, knee-breeches of the same material, white silk stockings and buckle shoes. A sword with a gold hilt and gold and tortoise-shell scabbard hung at his side, and on his broad breast glittered the Star and the other orders of the Legion of Honour instituted by him only a few weeks before. In his right hand he held a small three-cornered gold-laced hat, with which he gesticulated violently at times during the ensuing conversation, and in his left a paper, apparently containing notes of the person interviewed, as he consulted it from time to time.

Of course, as you may suppose, I did not see all this in the first moment, but I know you will like to have a full description of the omnipotent man before whom your poor Cecile now stood quite alone.

Letting his large clear eyes rest on me for a moment with a piercing gaze, he asked brusquely: "*Eh bien*, what have you come about?"

I knew that the Consul was not inclined to be very polite to ladies who expressed themselves at any length, and had heard besides that he sometimes put the most grossly impertinent questions, so that, despite the granting of their petition,

they often left the Consul's room in high and justifiable dudgeon. Remembering Talleyrand's advice I therefore gathered up all my courage and simply replied: "The restitution of my family property."

The great man seemed decidedly taken aback by this laconic answer. He threw up his head with a quite peculiar movement, turning it a little aside, so that I saw his face almost in profile. He frowned and stuck out his underlip.

"Of a truth, Madame, I cannot complain that you are too prolix—but," and he raised his voice to an angry pitch, "why are you staring at me so strangely? I would have you remember, Madame, that I am the head of the State, and, as such, demand to be treated with proper respect."

But his tone of angry annoyance had no terrors for me now. A strange feeling of security had come over me, and I felt no trace of alarm at the fierce frown and Imperator-glance (as Edmée calls it) of the man who stood so menacingly before me. For, *vois-tu* Annaliebe, no sooner did he give that imperious jerk of the head than a curious change came over me. —Even at his first few words, the sound of his voice and the peculiar accent carried me back to some long forgotten time, calling up dimly before me a picture I had not thought of for years and years. I groped in my memory—where had I seen that cold stern face, those clear-cut marble features before? Then, as he threw up his head and frowned and stuck out his underlip, the scales seemed to fall from my eyes, the veil woven by the busy years was rent asunder and I suddenly *knew* where and when this man had played a part in my former life.

I came a little closer to the All-Powerful Consul, who was kicking his foot impatiently against the fender awaiting some reply from me, and touching his arm I said with a smile,

"Monsieur le Consul, will you permit me to tell you a little story?"

Oh, you should have seen his face, dearest! I am sure he thought I must be quite mad for daring to lay my hand on his arm and also because his harsh manner only called forth a smile from me.

"Out with it, then!" he thundered, stepping back from me, "but waste as few words as possible over it, if you please." And once more he fixed me with a searching look, obviously uncertain if I were in my right mind.

So I began in a low voice (I never told you this story, dearest Annaliebe):

"It was an evening in July in the year 1783 and I was on a visit to Mademoiselle Laure Permon, the daughter of the Finance Minister Charles Permon and the Princess Comméene of Corsica, who had a beautiful villa near Brienne in the Champagne. I had wandered away by myself into the fields to pluck flowers and was so absorbed in my occupation that I never noticed a large herd of cattle grazing close by. I was nearly seventeen, but a severe illness in my childhood had left me small and weakly for my age—"

"If you intend giving me an account of your life's history, Madame," the Consul broke in roughly, "I may as well say at once that I have neither time nor inclination to listen to it."

"Pardon me, Monsieur le Consul," I returned, "I am coming now to the point of my story. I had gathered a large nosegay," I went on, "when I suddenly heard an infuriated bellow behind me, and turning round, saw to my horror that an enormous black bull, irritated perhaps by my red parasol, was bearing down upon me with blazing eyes and lowered horns.

"I gave one piercing shriek of terror, dropped my flowers and fled, as fast as my feet would carry me, towards the high road. But the bull rushed after me; I could hear his snorting breath. 'Help! Help!' I screamed as loud as I was able. A voice answered, and the next moment a pale-faced boy in the uniform of the Brienne cadets came running towards me. He waved his sword and rushed at the bull from the side, trying to divert its attention to himself. But I entirely frustrated the boy's plan by flying to him for protection. He called out something to me, but I was too frightened to understand, and, in any case, it was too late now. The bull reached me, felled me to the ground, and I lost consciousness. When I opened my eyes my preserver was supporting me with his arm, while with the other hand he wiped away the blood that was trickling from a wound in his cheek. But the bull was staggering blindly about the field, the courageous boy having managed at the last moment to pierce the brute's eye with his sword.

"I began to falter out some words of heartfelt thanks and tried to seize my preserver's hand. But he checked me with an authoritative gesture and said sternly:

"'It is extremely silly of girls to run about alone in fields where there are herds of cattle—remember that another time.' He nodded curtly, and without troubling himself further about me ran off in the direction of the College.

"Maybe you knew that boy, Monsieur le Consul?" I asked gently.

There was a curious light in his dark eyes as if he were gazing into his long-forgotten happy youth; but as he caught my expectant look fixed upon him, he frowned and answered coldly, "No, I cannot say I remember."

Will you believe me, Annaliebe, that I had nothing in my heart but kindness for this man? He had saved my young life —himself hardly more than a child—at the risk of his own. I remembered no longer his fame, his exalted position; I only saw the little pale cadet who had rescued me from deadly peril. I was deeply moved, but controlling my emotion as best I could I murmured, "Monsieur le Consul, may I venture on one more recollection of my youth?"

He said nothing, but nodded his head musingly.

"About a year after the incident I have just related," I resumed, "I was once more in the neighbourhood of Brienne at the country house of the Marquise de Montesson, a friend of my mother's.

"This lady proposed one day to take me to the Military College at Brienne, having received tickets for the annual examination of the cadets. It was the custom from time immemorial that the scholars who gained prizes should be crowned by the ladies, to which end the guests—this time the Marquise among the number—always brought wreaths with them.

"I was looking forward eagerly to this ceremony, for I had never forgotten my youthful preserver and hoped I might now see him again. I had never even told my parents of my narrow escape, but had raised an altar of gratitude in my heart to the boy—whose very name was unknown to me. What added zest to my anticipations was the thought that he would not be likely to recognise me, seeing that in this year I had grown out of the weakness of my childhood and had become tall and strong—a very different creature from the delicate little girl of the year before. So with a beating heart I took the wreath from the servant who was carrying it and secretly hoped I might have the good fortune to be able to give it to my youth-

ful hero. The wreath was a large and beautiful one, composed entirely of *laurel leaves*."

I had got so far in my story when I was suddenly interrupted by a strange sound—half sigh, half exclamation of joy—and the next moment the Consul had sprung forward and clasped both my hands in his. Overwhelming emotion shone in his dark eyes and trembled in his voice when he spoke.

"So *you* were that sweet kind girl, Mademoiselle? Oh, ask what you will of me, I promise you beforehand to grant it—no matter what it is. Will you accept a pension—a post of any kind? You shall have your property back—I am more than overjoyed to have it in my power to serve you!"

You may imagine, my Annaliebe, how startled and amazed I was at this sudden outburst, this rapture of kindness, from the man who, but a moment before, had shown himself so stern and unapproachable! I had no answer ready, all I could do was to falter without reflection, "Oh, *Sire*, what have I done to deserve this gratitude?"

"What, this too!" broke in Bonaparte in a tone of measureless excitement. "The royal title—for the first time—from your lips, my dear, infallible little Prophetess!—And once more your words will come true," he continued, with the strange, far-away look of a Seer. "Yes, I shall one day wear the crown and clasp the Royal mantle round my shoulders—now I know it for certain.—*You* set that laurel wreath on my young head in the far-off days at Brienne—the laurel crown that was to be followed by so many others. *You* whispered to me then—'May it bring you good luck!' and truly it did, as you very well know.—I am a fatalist, Mademoiselle, and since *you* have foretold it me, I *feel* the Crown of France upon my

brow, I *see* the Sceptre of the great Realm already in my hand! How can I ever thank you enough?

"But first the restitution of your property—" He seated himself at the great writing-table, wrote a few hurried lines, rang the bell and called to the Chamberlain, who entered at the summons—"Bourrienne."

I assure you, Annaliebe, I felt so dazed and bewildered by the rapid and extraordinary change in the Consul's manner as well as by his evidences of amazing superstition, obviously uttered in entire good faith, that I sank into a chair and covering my eyes with my hand endeavoured to collect my scattered senses.

Very soon the door opened and Bourrienne, the Consul's private secretary, entered. "Take this paper to the Minister Regnier," said Bonaparte, "and tell him to arrange at once for the restitution of Mademoiselle de Courtot's property." When the secretary had left the room Bonaparte turned to me, and holding out both his hands, with a beaming face said, "Now was that right—will you consider this as the first fruits of my gratitude?"

I could only bow my head and stammer a few confused words of thanks.

Then, drawing up a large tapestry-covered chair beside his writing-table and seating himself in another, he said with a smile—"Now please sit down here and let us have a little chat about my young days in Brienne, the only really happy ones, despite my later fame and splendour, I ever knew. You see," he added almost sadly, "I have so few people about me in whom I can place any real confidence and stand so lonely here upon the heights, that it is an unspeakable relief to be able to unburden myself to a friend out of my far-off youth. They

tell me that you are known here as '*la plus fidèle des fidèles.*' I trust you to keep all I confide in you now faithfully locked in your own bosom."

So we sat there like two old friends, I leaning back in my great arm-chair, the Consul sitting before his writing-table, his eyes generally fixed on a painting on the ceiling representing the Triumph of Minerva, or starting up from time to time to pace the room excitedly.

I felt myself—as you may imagine—in a very peculiar situation, and yet strangely moved as I listened to the great man's account of his life. It seemed to me that, excited by the unexpected encounter with the person whom, in his fatalistic way, he regarded as the augurer of his good fortune, he felt an irresistible impulse to unburden his heart of matters which he otherwise kept strictly secret. It was in some sort a confession, during which he confided things to me which moved my soul to shuddering admiration, so strangely were they compounded of the highest and noblest sentiments and the most glaring egotism.

Some day perhaps I may tell you something of it; for the present I am bound in honour to be silent. I told the Consul that I was deeply touched and grateful that he should think me worthy of this glimpse into his innermost feelings.

He had been talking thus to me of himself and his past for about half an hour, when he glanced at the clock and broke off suddenly, saying a number of people were waiting still to see him and that he must therefore take leave of me for the present. "But, Mademoiselle," he added, "I have not finished yet; you must come here frequently and let me pour my confidences into your faithful ear!"

What could I answer? A strange sense of fear and shrinking

had mingled with my admiration while I listened to the confidences of this man of might, whose deeds set him among the demi-gods of old. The thunder of the World's History rolled past me and stunned my brain. I am but a poor weak woman, and part of what I had just heard was so terrible, so soul-compelling that I rather hailed the interruption as a relief.

I rose. "Let me thank you once more, Monsieur le Consul, for the honour of your confidence," I said. "Whatever you think fit to tell me shall never go any further. And as to your faults, the political sins of which you accuse yourself, who can judge them by the ordinary standard? The most of them are virtues in a ruler. What is commendable in the private individual may be the ruin of the Head of a State. It was *too much* goodness that brought your august predecessor to the scaffold."

"I thank you, Mademoiselle," returned the Consul gently, "you have understood me. And now adieu and *au revoir*."

He gave me his hand with a winning smile; I curtseyed low and left the room.

I seemed to move in a dream, I saw nobody; I scarcely heard Talleyrand's congratulations on the unusual length of the audience. And it was not the thought that I had achieved my object, that I was restored to ease and fortune that so moved me, it was the consciousness that from the plain unassuming woman of yesterday I had suddenly become the confidante of the most secret emotions of this omnipotent Hero.

On leaving the Tuileries I made Edmée's coachman drive me out into the Bois de Boulogne for a little while to give me time to collect my agitated thoughts, and when I finally returned to my friend, who had become quite anxious at my long absence, I told her of my wonderful recognition of the

Consul and of the prompt restitution of my property, but not a word of the rest.

When she heard of the Consul's firm persuasion that my wish had brought him luck, she said that in that case I had the ball at my feet here and could do what I liked with the Consul. She then gave me other instances of the great man's superstition, from which one must infer that he is very mystically inclined.

Thus she described how artfully Madame Josephine had contrived to work upon these mystical tendencies for her own advantage by persuading Napoleon that it was *her* star that controlled his destiny, quoting as her reason for this assertion the fortune foretold to her by an old gipsy in Martinique: "*You will one day be more than a Queen and yet die in a hospital.*"

"More than a Queen"—you see the inference, my Annaliebe? And in truth, I fancy the fulfilment of this presage is not far off; the second half of the prediction may yet be made clear in the time to come.

Then here is a rather interesting anagram which Edmée gave me to puzzle over and which I enclose for your diversion. It runs thus—

"On a découvert dans les mots 'révolution française' une anagramme fort singulière. Voici la manière de la faire: on tire d'abord de révolution française le mot 'veto' qui s'y trouve, et après qu'on l'a supprimé, on reunit ce qui reste de lettres et l'on en forme la phrase—'Un Corse la finira.'"

I am curious to see how soon Bonaparte will shake off his two "shadow" colleagues. There was a very tumultuous scene in the Legislative Chamber the other day when one of the members ventured to hint at the Imperial Crown being offered

to Bonaparte—a certain Monsieur Bougival and his party made a frightful uproar against it. Nevertheless, I firmly believe the day is not far hence when Bonaparte will be the absolute monarch of this realm,—whether under the title of Consul or Emperor is quite immaterial.

My next step will be to visit my château of Mont Courtot and take possession of it again. Retrazet, unfortunately, was burned down during the Revolution. I hardly think I shall rebuild it—Camille must see to that some day. The land is let out on lease by the government but the rents are to be paid in to me now, beginning from the 1st of October last. This is a very welcome arrangement; altogether, you cannot think what a delightful feeling it is after all these years of straitened pecuniary circumstances to be once more a châtelaine and to have ample resources at my command.

The moment I have got Mont Courtot in proper order you, my dearest and best of friends, must both of you come to visit me. My first errand to-day was to go to Edmée's carriage builder, of whom I bought a " berline " to be sent to you in return for the carriage you so generously gave me for the journey. It will be despatched in a few days.

And now farewell, darling Annaliebe. I am so thankful to have the dreadful weight of the audience off my mind! How earnestly I thank God too that matters took such a favourable turn for me. My devoted love to you all.

CECILE.

The prediction made to Madame Josephine during her early girlhood in Martinique has been much doubted; but, supposing it to be true, the second part may find its explanation in

the fact that the Château of Malmaison where Josephine died actually was once a Hospital.

That Napoleon was deeply imbued with the belief in an ever active spiritual world is confirmed by the writings of many of his contemporaries. Madame de Remusat speaks of Bonaparte's love of ghost stories. His true connection with the fortune-teller Lenormand has never been explained, but it certainly had some spiritualistic foundation. Turquan too speaks in his Memoirs of the great weight attached by Bonaparte on all occasions to presentiments and dreams, which he often allowed to influence his actions.

Constant confirms the story told in the foregoing letter of Madame Josephine and her star. He even quotes her actual words to Napoleon: "They talk of *your* star, but it is *mine* which influences your life, for it was to *me* the high destiny was foretold."

Later on, as Empress, Josephine had ever the fear before her eyes that Bonaparte would cast her off for her childlessness, and succeeded in deferring that catastrophe for long by assuring him that his good fortune would forsake him if he repudiated her. And so, to a certain degree, it actually fell out, for Napoleon's fortunes began to wane almost simultaneously with his divorce from Josephine and his marriage to Marie Louise of Austria.

Not till Waterloo, however, did Napoleon's firm reliance on his star forsake him. When all was lost there, he is said to have turned to Coulaincourt with the words, "My star has set —I see it no longer."

CHAPTER XXVII.

FIFTEENTH LETTER.

PARIS, 3d Germinal XI.

My Annaliebe:

I still feel as if I were living in a dream. The extraordinary succession of events that have just happened to me, the unexpected change of fortune—it quite bewilders and confuses me.

My days pass now in one round of pleasures and entertainments. Whether the story of my long audience with the Consul and the subsequent restitution of my property has spread abroad and people are curious to see me, I know not, but Edmée and I are simply overwhelmed with invitations. These alternate with visits to the theatres and other places of public amusement till I feel as if I were living in a whirlpool.

What a contrast to the peaceful calm of the never-to-be-forgotten years spent at your side, my best and dearest!

But now to tell you something of these gay doings.—A few evenings ago we went to the Opera House to see the performance of a hunting ballet, "La chasse du jeune Henri," with Méhul's delightful music. There were about twenty horses trotting about the stage at once, and my delighted Parisians roared themselves hoarse with applause.

Next morning Edmée persuaded me to accompany her to

the Panthéon where, amongst many others, I saw the tombs of Voltaire and Rousseau. All-conquering Death has wiped away the enmity that existed between these two in life and there they lie now peaceably side by side.

These were the men whose writings helped to bring about the cataclysm of the Revolution. They have gone to their long home, the Revolution is over and done with and—things are very much the same as they were before. To what end then all that horror and bloodshed?... Oh, it is a strange and enigmatical world!

As to society, one might almost say that the Thames had suddenly emptied itself into the Seine. There are over 8000 sons and daughters of Britannia in Paris just now, and the observer has many opportunities for making interesting comparisons between the rival nations.

I should not like to swear that *ces dames* are without exception " Miladies "; some of them look to me as if they hailed from the near neighbourhood of Covent Garden Market, but money confers all the distinction necessary in Paris at present. There are also several *réunions* in which Englishmen of similar political opinions congregate. The Duke of Cumberland, who has taken the charming house of the well-known Dr. Willoun, receives the highest English nobility, while the members of the Opposition gather round Lord Holland and are much in request at Madame de Récamier's country house.

British Art is also hurrying into Paris—Mr. Kemble, who competes with our Talma, and Miss Vinci at the Opéra Bouffe. The great Madame Mara too is daily expected from London.

An exhibition of National Products was held in the Louvre lately, and when we visited it we could not but notice how differently the many English present behaved from our own

countrymen. While the latter laughed and gossiped and seemed to look upon the whole affair merely as an excellent opportunity for making bad puns, these foreigners examined everything with interested attention and expressed themselves most ably on various points of the Exhibition.

We were in the Théâtre Français the other evening for the début of a Mademoiselle Duchesnois, who has since become the rage. The play was *Phèdre*, but my attention was much distracted by the Prince de Poix, who shared our loge and who persisted in whispering all sorts of nonsense and wicked stories in my ear during the performance. There was one, for instance, of the crafty Fouché and the trick by which he had forced a certain prelate, one of the chief opponents of the Concordat, to give his vote for it. This prelate, it seems, was intimate with a lady of somewhat doubtful reputation, a Madame Visconti, which circumstance Fouché ferreted out, and surprising him late one evening with the lady in a very compromising situation, he threatened him with publicity and so won over an enemy on whom even the First Consul had tried his hand in vain.

The Prince then went on to speak of Bonaparte's appointment as Consul for life and his intention of removing his residence to St. Cloud, whither his Court choir and Chaplain had already preceded him; also that the First Consul had just nominated his brother Lucian chief officer of the Legion of Honour—perhaps, after all, we should soon have another Connétable de France! And more to the same effect, though I could see that he was more cautious than formerly in what he said to me, especially on the subject of the Consul, having heard of course of the results of my interview with the Great

Man. But you should have seen his droll roguish eyes all the time!

He brought with him the very newest thing in gentlemen's hats which I had not seen before—the brim turned up sharply back and front against a flattened crown. This shape is called "à la Ventinelle"—I do not know why—but I should dearly love to see the Herr Candidatus in one, he would look too delightfully comical! (But, if you love me, do not tell him I said so.) With this hat many gentlemen still wear the *perruque à nœuds*, though Bonaparte has long since discarded the fashion.

In a few days I shall start on my journey into the Vendée. What memories it will awaken of my happy untroubled childhood!

Farewell then for to-day, my own Annaliebe.

Ever in fondest affection thy

CECILE.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

SIXTEENTH LETTER.

PARIS once more, 19th Germinal XI.

What a long time since you had news of me, *amie de mon âme!* Your last welcome letter was forwarded to Mont Courtot and reached me there the day before my return to Paris—a long journey for it to make; for my old home is a hundred miles further from you than this city.

These have been days of pleasure, but, as you may imagine, fraught with pain, that I have spent in my childhood's home. I travelled—in your dear familiar carriage of course—over Châteaudun, Tours, and Poitiers, and arrived at my destination on the fifth day. Oh, my Annaliebe, can you not imagine my feelings when the tower of the Cathedral of Poitiers rose before me on the horizon, when I caught the first sparkle of the blue Charente and the irresistible glamour of "home" began to weave itself about me? There were the well-remembered leafy woods, the peaceful herds grazing in the pastures, and I heard once more the familiar patois which in its mixture of Latin and French sounds so unintelligible to the stranger. The racial type too is quite peculiar to this part of the country, and has remained so unchanged in feature, customs, and characteristics since the days of the great migration of tribes into the West, that they are still known to the surround-

ing provinces as "the Huns." Handsome my beloved countrymen are not with their large heads, sallow complexion, and small twinkling eyes, but in return they are God-fearing and faithful unto death, as indeed they proved in the past years. They beggared themselves for their King and fought to the last drop of blood, and if there had been more unity of purpose among their leaders—d'Elbée, Jacquelin, Charette, and the rest of them—who can tell but what they would have driven the Terrorists out of Paris and placed the King upon the throne once more? But as things fell out, they have had to suffer incredible hardships. After their defeat at Chollet the entire population of the Vendée was outlawed. With tigerish frenzy the Jacobins slaughtered women, children, and aged people, and smoking ruins marked the path of the victors. The horrors they witnessed as boys have left indelible traces on the faces of the men, and they are a grave and sad-eyed people, but they have won for all time their title of "les fidèles," and here the Bourbons are still kings. Their portraits share with the Saints the private altar you find in every house, no matter how small.

A bitter disappointment awaited me at Mont Courtot. The house of my fathers was still standing and my heart beat in joyful anticipation of finding things as I remembered them of old. But on nearer inspection I discovered that this château had not escaped the universal destruction which laid waste the rest of the country. The walls were intact, but the interior was ravaged beyond description—a scene of horror and desolation—and all idea of living there out of the question. So I lodged for two days with the man who has rented the property for years and lives at the foot of the castle hill. This tenant has certainly made the most of his time! He is one of those

astute foreigners who swarmed into the country at the time of the Revolution, seeking what they might devour. He still wraps himself about in a mantle of devotion to Liberty, but, nevertheless, is a merciless tryant to his people and universally hated. The good old Curé, who only returned some weeks ago, told me they were all thankful I regained possession of the property just in time to prevent Monsieur le Maitre—so my worthy tenant is called—from carrying out his rumoured intention of buying Mont Courtot with the money he has got by cutting down the wood. Imagine my feelings if I had arrived here to find this man in full possession of the lands of my forefathers! Of course, I took the first opportunity of getting away from this intolerable hospitality, and going over to Poitiers, went to a notary recommended by the Curé and placed my affairs in his hands. Monsieur le Maitre at once received notice to quit, and it will not be long, I trust, before Mont Courtot will be restored to its former condition of comfort and beauty. What I should have done without the assistance of the good Curé I really do not know. In any case, some six months must elapse before the château is habitable, and I must look out for a trustworthy man to perform the duties of steward.

How thankful I should have been for some advice and assistance from your clear-headed husband or Uncle Briest! I am so terribly ignorant in all business matters and had not a soul I could consult. I hope I may soon have the joy of hearing that you think favourably of my plan of your all coming over to stay with me as soon as Château Courtot is at all presentable.

I returned to Paris the way I came, only making a slight detour in order to visit Château Trellissac. I will not open up

the old wounds, dearest,—no need to tell you what my emotions were on seeing the dear spot again where I had spent many a happy hour as a child with my lost love! The ancient castle is in ruins like the rest, but the splendidly wooded park —our favourite playground—is but little changed. Tearfully I bade farewell to this grave of some of my happiest memories and turned my face once more towards Paris.

Edmée received me with open arms and at once handed me a missive from the *Conseiller d'état* Bénézeth informing me that the Consul desired my attendance to-morrow at St. Cloud.

In the forenoon of the following day a coach with four horses arrived to fetch me to the palace, and in it sat my god-daughter Adèle de Talhuët, whom Madame Josephine had thoughtfully sent to bear me company.

Madame welcomed me first in her apartments, when I took the opportunity of thanking her for her good offices in furthering my cause with Bonaparte. Her husband, she told me, had given her an account of our mutual recognition, and she expressed herself as delighted that the Consul had had some one to talk to of the happy old days in Brienne.

The Château is really very fine since its restoration, though the government has had to pay a pretty sum from first to last—over a million francs I believe. The apartments were magnificently furnished and decorated, though somewhat too gaudily for my taste.

Madame Josephine presently took me into her exquisite boudoir—a surprise from the Consul on leaving Malmaison. It is entirely hung—walls as well as windows—with rose-coloured and white silk. The first moment I entered the room I was struck by the strangely familiar aspect of the furniture—all delicate carving and gilt, and covered with rose-coloured

silk embroidered in darker shades with here and there a glint of gold thread; then catching sight of the sphinxes that formed the arms of the chairs, I recognised with a sharp pang the whole *ameublement*. It was from the private apartments of my sweet Queen Marie Antoinette in the Trianon! Josephine admitted the truth of my surmise, adding that that was why Napoleon's present had given her so much pleasure. Alas that the owners should go and the inanimate objects remain!

Well, we seated ourselves in the dainty chairs we both had seen before under such very different circumstances and conversed on old friends and new events, many of Josephine's extremely candid remarks reminding me of Madame de Campan's words the other day when she declared that Madame only did this to lead people on to similar frankness. Therefore I was very guarded in my replies.

At one o'clock Bénézeth appeared to conduct me to the Consul, who greeted me with the utmost cordiality, and made me give him a full, true, and particular account of my journey and its results. The state of affairs in the Vendée interested him greatly, and I could see by the questions he put to me how exhaustive was his knowledge of all matters concerning the country in general.

Afterwards, he begged me to be seated, as he wished to continue his account of his life. And thus, my Annaliebe, passed another hour which I may count as one of the most important in my life. Once more I was filled with admiration and yet with fear of the man who had raised himself by sheer force of intellect and indomitable will to such heights as probably no man has ever reached before, but trampling mercilessly on every obstacle, be it friend or foe, that barred his upward progress.

Possibly the Consul read something of this in my face, for he suddenly rose from his chair, laid a hand on my shoulder, and said kindly: "Now, you see, I have frightened you. But do not be afraid; my heart has room for gentler emotions too, as you will discover in time. I have told you so much about my past," he went on in a lighter tone, "supposing now you tell me something of yourself and the experiences you went through. I know that you were the inseparable companion of the unfortunate Princesse de Lamballe and that you were condemned to death; how did you manage to escape?"

So I told him in as few words as possible of my wonderful rescue by Hector, my flight into Germany, and my quiet happy life with my dear friends. The Consul nodded his head musingly. "Yes," he said, "these Prussians are a strong and loyal nation; I should like to have them for my allies. Ah," he added, returning to the subject of the Terror, "Paris was one great madhouse in those days, but I shall take good care that such a thing does not happen again. I shall keep those Jacobins down with a strong hand!"

The period of my audience was at an end, for Monsieur de Remusat now announced the Minister Talleyrand. The Consul rose, and going to his writing-table said, "By the way, what did you say was the name of your brave fiancé who met his death in rescuing you?"

"The Vicomte Hector de Trellissac," I answered in a low voice. "Ah, then a Vendéan, too?" observed Bonaparte, evidently writing the name on a sheet of paper. Then, turning to me and holding out his hand—"You hear, Mademoiselle, that Talleyrand wants me, so our conversation must be interrupted for to-day. I hope, however, to see you again ere long. To-morrow the solemn function of the re-establishment of the

Church takes place, which I daresay you would like to see. I will have a place reserved for you in Notre Dame. Adieu, my dear confidante, and au revoir!"

I curtseyed and departed, the Consul's carriage again being placed at my disposal.

And so, my Annaliebe, there was an end of my second audience with the great Consul, during which I got a still deeper insight into the character of this most unique man. Perhaps some day I may be able to give you an account of it by word of mouth.

The next morning—the first celebration of Easter Day for nine years—the church bells rang in the day of the restoration of the Church and her doctrines. The Pope has been obliged to consent to the curtailment of the number of Festivals, only Easter, Whitsuntide, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, and All Saints' Day being retained, but otherwise the position of the Church is very much as it was before the Revolution.

As the clock struck 11 one of the state carriages arrived to carry us (my invitation had been extended to Edmée) to the Cathedral of Notre Dame, the whole road being lined by thousands of spectators. We were received at the door by de Remusat, who conducted us to a platform to the right of the Choir. These platforms, of which there were several, all richly draped as well as the entire nave of the Cathedral, were already filled to overflowing and the clergy in full canonicals were assembled at the altars.

Oh, my Annaliebe, it did one's heart good to see the great Cathedral once more thronged with reverent people and decked in all its stately ornaments. Could this be the same church which had been the scene of so many shameless deeds in the past years; where the vile mob and its leaders had danced

round the high altar howling impious songs to the Goddess of Reason? So low had it fallen that only ten years before Beaumarchais boasted to the King's very face that he would have his Figaro performed in Notre Dame if he were forbidden the theatres!

To-day the mighty columns were festively decorated, the pictures of the Saints were in their old accustomed places, and white-robed acolytes swung their censers at the various altars. And now the thunder of sixty cannon boomed out over the city, the majestic tones of the great organ rolled through the edifice and mingled with the jubilant shout which rose from the thronging multitudes, the massive portals of the Cathedral swung slowly back, and, accompanied by a regal suite of Ministers, Generals, and foreign Ambassadors, Bonaparte entered the Cathedral. The assembled clergy received him with great pomp of incense and the sprinkling of holy water and conducted him to his place under a sumptuous baldachin in front of the chancel.

There he stood, his General's uniform looking plain and unpretentious beside the gorgeous, gold-laden uniforms of the various State and Military officers, and yet every eye was irresistibly drawn to that impassive clear-cut face, stony and inscrutable as Destiny. In spite of his insignificant stature the man looked every inch a king.—It was with strangely mixed feelings—half proud, half fearful—that I reflected that this man with whose name all France—nay, all Europe—was ringing should have held me worthy to obtain a glimpse into his innermost soul, should call himself "my friend."

It was a study to watch his absolutely unmoved demeanour while the Archbishop of Aix extolled him and the new gov-

ernment to the skies—the same Archbishop who crowned Louis XVI.

The ceremony did not last very long. Again the cannons roared, and amid prolonged and deafening shouts of "Vive Bonaparte—Vive le premier Consul!" the Omnipotent One drove back to the Tuileries, where a grand gala-dinner took place.

All this will interest you greatly, and I know that you rejoice with me that my affairs have taken so lucky a turn.

Ever in unalterable devotion,

Your CECILE.

CHAPTER XXIX.

SEVENTEENTH LETTER.

PARIS, 5th Floreal XI.

"Rest in the Lord—wait patiently for Him,
And He shall give thee thy heart's desire."

You remember, my Annaliebe, how dear old Uncle Briest comforted me with those words years ago—and oh, how right he was, the good staunch-hearted man! For my heart's desire has been granted me—in full, in overflowing measure, till I can only clasp my hands and pray in deepest gratitude and humility, "Oh my God, make me worthy of the joy Thou hast brought to me."

Annaliebe, my Hector lives—God has given him back to me!

But let me begin from the very beginning. We were invited yesterday evening to a large assembly at the house of the Marquise de Noailles in the Faubourg St. Germain, but did not start till pretty late because the streets were very crowded and noisy, the return of the troops from Egypt having occasioned great rejoicings. Companies of soldiers marched through the streets, colours flying, bands playing; the Consul had held a grand review at the Tuileries, after which he distributed a number of decorations among his brave old compan-

ions in arms and several officers had been promoted. These gallant sun-burnt warriors were the heroes of the day, and even invaded the exclusive circles of the Faubourg St. Germain, several of its members having entered the Army of Egypt to fight for their country under Afric's burning sun.

Well, as I said, it was somewhat late before we reached the Palais Noailles and the rooms were already filled with guests. The Marquise, on receiving us, said she could promise us a variety of entertainment for the evening. She had engaged the celebrated "mystificateur" Dugueselin for the amusement of the young people, and also expected her nephew Victor Noailles with several of his brother officers from the Egyptian Army, who would doubtless entertain us with stories of their experiences in the Wonderland of the Pyramids.

Entering the salons I was soon hailed on all sides with congratulations on the agreeable turn of my fortunes, those of the guests to whom I was a stranger begging to be presented for that purpose. Among those I knew were the old Abbess of Abbeville and her niece Lady Tollendal with two pretty daughters, the Duc de Liancourt and Princess Thérèse, Madame de Sabatier, Comtesse Montesquieu, and of course the ubiquitous Prince de Poix.

When "Monsieur le mystificateur" arrived presently the youngest Tollendal came to me and begged me to join in the games. I do not know how it was—perhaps a presentiment of coming happiness—but I felt gay and young that evening as I had not done for years, and acceded to the pretty creature's request, though I had no business by rights in that frolicsome *galère*.

This game of "mystifications" has become very popular here and was talked of that evening in Malmaison, though it

is really very childish—much the same as "the stool of penitence" our Phillinchen used to play with her little friends. Here each player is seated in turn in front of a large mirror into which he gazes and has to guess the meaning of the scenes depicted behind him by the others, representing a word, a line of poetry, a *bon mot*, etc. If he guesses correctly—which is of course made as difficult for him as possible—he receives a prize; if not, he must pay a forfeit.

The ingenious originator of the game being present himself, the choice of words and pictures was particularly mystifying, and the company enjoyed themselves hugely over the extraordinary mistakes that very naturally occurred.

Luck had favoured me so far, and I had always managed to guess correctly, when, late in the evening, it came to my turn to seat myself once more in front of the mirror.

While I waited for the development of the enigma, I amused myself by gazing into the curious vista which presented itself before me. The long suite of rooms was open, the great folding doors thrown wide, and at the extreme end of the *enfilade* hung another large mirror, exactly opposite the one into which I was looking, thus producing an effect to the eye as if the rooms stretched away indefinitely into the distance.

While I was engaged in following out this optical delusion, I suddenly saw an officer in the becoming uniform of the Chasseurs appear at the extreme end of the vista.

He was evidently no longer young, his hair and moustache were gray, and a glittering Order hung on his breast. A great scar ran from the bronzed cheek right up over the high forehead and a black shade concealed the left eye, but the other one was large and dark and the nose handsome and aquiline.

I cannot describe the strange impression this officer made on me coming out of space like a ghost and advancing towards me through the long line of rooms, apparently unknown to the groups of gentlemen standing about, who gazed after him in astonishment. He came slowly nearer and nearer, that glowing dark eye fixed upon me in the glass.

Oh, Annaliebe, when he entered the salon next to the one in which I was seated a cold shiver ran through me, as when something apparently supernatural confronts one. A mysterious spell seemed to emanate from that figure, which reminded me so strangely of one who lived only in my heart and memory.

I started from my chair, clasping the arms with convulsive fingers, and leaning far forward gazed with fixed and staring eyes into the depths of the mirror. What was it?—could the dead arise?—was it a phantom, the apparition of my lost lover? Edmée and the other ladies, alarmed at my strange behaviour, hurried up to me. "Cecile, Cecile," cried my friend, "what is it? What is the matter?"

At the mention of my name I saw a smile of beatitude pass over the man's features. I turned round—saw two arms stretched out to meet me, and with a cry of "Hector—my Hector!" sank fainting on his breast.

But my unconsciousness lasted only a few moments. Opening my eyes again I saw the beloved face bending over me, and the very words he whispered when he rescued me from death trembled on his lips once more. "Cecile, my Cecile, have I found you again?" "Yes, Hector," I cried, throwing my arms round his neck, "and this time never to part again!"

The entire company had hastened in from the other rooms

and gazed bewildered at this extraordinary scene. They did not know that two people who had each thought the other dead had now come together again after long weary years.

"But who is this strange officer?—how did he come here?—does anybody know him?" were the questions asked by several of the gentlemen. Suddenly through the confusion came a clear ringing voice—"*Ah, mais c'est le colonel Hector! Monsieur le colonel, je vous salue,* but where did you spring from?" and Victor de Noailles hurried forward with outstretched hand.

"What!" exclaimed my lover with a beaming smile, "do none of you recognise me?—at least only *this* one? Have I really to tell you my name? Well, then, I am Hector de Trellissac, and Cecile de Courtot here is my fiancée!"

Their astonishment beggars description. At first they woud not believe that the valiant Colonel Hector of the Egyptian Army and their dear friend and cousin the Vicomte de Trellissac whom they had long counted dead were one and the same person. Then of course they overwhelmed us with joyful congratulations, and I assure you the reunion of this old pair of lovers will long remain a tale of wonder and amazement to them all.

PARIS, 7th Floréal.

My Annaliebe: I was interrupted in my letter to you by Hector—you will not be vexed with me, I am sure. Our abiding friendship can in no wise be altered by my great happiness; on the other hand, you can well imagine how much we have to say to each other.

I am hardly used to it yet, my heart has not yet accustomed itself to the thought that it has really found him again, my be-

loved, my long lost. Oh Annaliebe, what it was to wake on the morning after and to remember—he is alive—you have found him once more! The joy is almost more than I can bear. I still cannot help thinking it is a dream, and yet there he stands, my beloved, my Hector, and draws me to his warm and faithful heart.

You will ask, dearest, how it all came about—his recovery from the jaws of death and subsequent career, so I cannot do better than describe the happy conversation that took place between us yesterday, letting Hector speak for himself.

We went down into Edmée's beautiful grounds behind the palace and seated ourselves on a secluded seat under the magnificent old trees. A flood of morning sunshine bathed the smooth green lawns, the roar of the great city came muffled to us out of the distance, and the bushes close by were alive with a fluttering, twittering crowd of little birds. It was like a fairy tale. I had awakened from my long deep sleep and the Prince was beside me.

Hand clasped in hand we sat together, and Hector began his story.

"That blow which felled me to the ground, my Cecile, deprived me of consciousness, out of which, however, I was soon roused by the trampling of the crowd. I must have rolled then to one side and come under the cart, nothing else could have saved me from being trodden to death by the terrified mob.

"Here I must have been found later on and taken to a hospital, but I know nothing for certain, the blackness of night lay upon me. That blow had struck out one of my eyes and, for a time, injured my brain—my memory was utterly gone.

"Long weeks and months passed before I regained some gleam of consciousness, but a heavy cloud still lay over my

mind, and my memory did not return. I was alive—that is all you can say, but the past was a blank. At times when I felt the bandage over my eye or caught sight of myself in the little mirror of my sick-room I would ask myself puzzled, 'Who are you and how did you come here?' But I found no answer, I had forgotten my very name and passed my days in fruitless ponderings. There was no one who could enlighten me; my only attendant was aged and half-witted, and to the taciturn old doctor who occasionally visited me I was a total stranger.

"About a year must have passed in this way, when the veil began slowly to lift, *your* dear name, my Cecile, came back to me and with it the full consciousness of my terrible loss. I knew that I had failed to save you, that you had fallen a victim to the executioner."

Here I broke in on Hector's story to ask if Tancred d'Aubignac had never brought him news of my rescue, but he said he had never seen nor heard of him again; he, too, must have been swept away by the all-devouring flood of the Revolution.

"By the time my mind had slowly recovered its balance," he continued, "and my bodily strength in some degree restored, the Terror was over and the Directoire reigned in its stead.

"At last I was discharged from the hospital and managed to make my way on foot, by slow and painful stages, into the Vendée. There I took part in the struggle against the Republican troops, but when Charette concluded peace with General Hoche and so put an end to the fighting I felt that my occupation was gone. My property was sequestrated, the château of my fathers in ruins; you, my beloved, were dead—what was life to me any longer? I saw the misery of my downtrodden people, saw the hopelessness of their cause; I myself

was a half-blind beggar, relations and friends I had none—all had been swallowed up in this accursed revolution. Despair took hold on me, and thoughts of death by my own hand began to creep into my mind.

"Once I thought of joining the Army of the Allies, but the reports that reached me of the doings of the Comte d'Artois and the other Princes in Coblenz disgusted me; besides, I could not make up my mind to side with strangers and fight against my own country. I was at the end of my resources.—It was then I first heard of the Expedition Bonaparte—the inscrutable man who had already begun to revive the honour of France—was planning for Egypt and determined to join it, hoping to die there fighting for my country. Laying aside my family name, I entered myself simply as Hector, and joined the 4th Regiment at Toulon as a common *chasseur*.

"Of course, the idea of serving as a private was not altogether pleasant to me, a former officer of the Garde du Corps, but I was indifferent to the hardships or discomforts of this life—my hopes were all centred on another world!"

Need I say, my Annaliebe, that I had to interrupt my lover somewhat at this point?

Presently he continued: "I was in the thick of the fighting from the beginning; was made officer at the Pyramids and Captain at Jaffa. After the battle of Abukir Bonaparte himself nominated me Colonel for my—as he was pleased to say—splendid bravery. Ah, it is easy enough to be daring when one has nothing to bind one to this world. But, as generally happens in such cases, not a bullet ever touched me—I seemed to bear a charmed life.

"At this, my first personal encounter with the great Gen-

eral, he asked me with a searching glance, 'Your name is Hector?' 'Yes.' 'Only Hector?' 'Yes,' I replied. Then I suddenly bent forward and whispered—curious to see what he would say, for I was quite indifferent to the possible results of my revelation—'But it used to be Hector de Trellissac and I was one of the Chouans!'

"Without a moment's hesitation he held out his hand. '*Mon brave*,' he answered, 'that is no detriment to you in my eyes,' and with a nod he passed on along the front.

"Do you know, Cecile, from that day I began to take an interest in life again and to share the enthusiastic worship of the Army for this marvellous young General whose military genius led it triumphant over the apparently insuperable, till his own firm reliance on his star had come to be the unswerving belief of the whole Army.

"The day before yesterday when the First Consul called his old officers of the Egyptian Army round him—how we had missed him in the last few years!—to distribute the decorations, I was amongst them. As he conferred the new Order of the Legion of Honour upon me, he took me gently by the ear and whispered: '*Mon brave*, you have relations in the Faubourg St. Germain—you would do well to go and see them this evening. You will find a dear friend there who will be delighted to see you, *saluez-la de ma part*.' He gave me a friendly nod and with a '*Bonne chance, mon colonel!*' passed on.

"For the first moment I was puzzled, then, like a flash, came the thought, the certainty, that you and you alone could be the dear friend he alluded to. I did not pause to wonder how he came by his knowledge—we had always credited him with supernatural powers of divination—the moment I was free I hastened to my cousin's house and there, sure enough,

I found you, my darling, found my long-lost, ever-regretted happiness!"

Thus Hector's story ended—but, oh, Annaliebe, what words shall describe the joy that the good God has at last poured out upon me with so generous a hand! Not only has my dear love been restored to me—he has remained as true to me as I to him. Oh, the bliss to know that I am still his all in all!

And how handsome is my Hector, and, in spite of the fierce heat of Egypt, so strong and well! I positively love that eye-shade too—does it not remind me every moment of what he has sacrificed for me? And then he had the audacity to ask me if I did not think the blind beggar too poor a match!

I had to tell him all about you, my dearest, best of friends! He could not hear enough and bids me tell you he means soon to thank you personally for having taken such devoted care of what the flatterer is pleased to call his Heart's Delight.

While we were still sitting together in the garden, we were joined by our good Edmée, who is quite beside herself with joy at our happiness. Hector then suddenly enquired how the Consul came to tell him of my presence here, seeing that he was unacquainted with me? "What, Colonel!" cried Edmée, throwing up her hands, "she has not told you? Why, your fiancée is one of the most influential women in France just now."

You may imagine my Hector's astonishment when he heard the story; but he quite believes in Bonaparte's sincerity in the matter, having seen many proofs in Egypt of the man's deep-rooted fatalism.

As to the future, my Annaliebe, all we have decided upon as yet is that we shall be married as soon as possible, probably

a few weeks hence. But to think that I must forego the happiness of having you with me then, dearest, though I congratulate you with all my heart on the reason, disappoints me more than words can say.—We shall have to come and see you soon instead, that you may convince yourselves of my unspeakable happiness. Besides, I want Hector to know all the dear people who were so heavenly kind to me, a forlorn stranger.

Whether we shall settle at Mont Courtot is also an open question just yet, but one thing I sincerely hope, and that is that Hector will consent to leave the army. He has done enough for France surely. I feel I can never let him out of my sight again as long as we both live.

But our correspondence, my Annaliebe, shall in no wise suffer by my new happiness. Our friendship is for all time, nothing can ever alter that.

And now, sweetest friend, farewell; you will let the others know of the great blessing that has been vouchsafed to me. Give them all my dear love, and you, my darling, rejoice with your happy, happy

CECILE.

The interesting family event to which Cecile alluded in her letter occurred on the 11th of July, 1802, when a boy was born to the von Alvenslebens, who received the name of Werner. On the same day Colonel Hector de Trellissac and Mademoiselle Cecile de Courtot were married in Paris. Their wedding present from Annaliebe and her husband, as described in my great-grandmother's diary, was a large silver tray engraved with the Alvensleben-Loë crest and underneath it the dear old Manor House at Kalbe with the inscription "Cecile's Home."

The wedding took place very quietly in the Duchess Edmée's palace, the Consul Bonaparte being represented by Monsieur de Remusat.

These details are given in a letter from the Vicomtesse de Trellissac dated from Mont Courtot the 12th Messidor. At the close she says:

. . . We are in the seventh heaven here, my Annaliebe. To see the old familiar faces about me, to live in the dear home of my childhood, the one love of my life beside me—what more could heart desire? Write me very soon how you are getting on. Adieu, my Annaliebe, and once more our fondest congratulations to you and your Werner on the arrival of the dear little boy; also our renewed thanks for the lovely present. Yes, you are right, my darling, the dear familiar house was "Cecile's home," her only one, for long, long years! And we two know that each has her home in the other's heart.

My Hector sends remembrances to you all; he is so grateful for your endless kindness to me and looks forward as eagerly as I do to meeting you. My love to all the dear friends, but especially to your Werner and sweet Phillinchen. Oh Annaliebe, how unutterably happy is

Your Cecile!

This letter is the last of the collection. My great-grandmother makes frequent mention in her diary of news from her friend—for instance, on the 17th February 1803 that the Vicomtesse gave her tidings of an expected happy event—but the originals are missing. Whether lost or destroyed by some accident who shall say after the lapse of nearly a hundred years?

On the 10th of June 1803 occurs the following sad notice in Annaliebe's diary:

Yesterday we received the terrible news from Vicomte de Trellissac that Cecile had given birth on the 26th Floréal to a daughter, but, two days afterwards, had passed quietly away.

God help the poor husband to whom so short a span of happiness was granted—and me who am thus bereaved of my dearest friend! Ah, my presentiment was right—I felt I should never see her again. My grief is too deep for words.

ANNA GOTTLIEBE.

Thus ends the record of the devoted friendship that existed between this charming French lady and my great-grandmother.

Whether descendants of Cecile de Courtot still exist in France—whether the daughter alluded to in the diary survived, or the family of "Courtot de Cissey," to which the well-known War Minister belonged, are descendants of the Baroness, I was not able to discover during my researches in France.

What remains of most lives after a hundred years?—A handful of dust, a few lines of writing on faded crumbling paper and maybe a story or two handed down from father to son—nothing more.

But if these traditions last further than into the second generation, it is because the heroes or heroines of them were really exceptional natures. And that, I think, was the case with the two whose story I have laid before the reader in the foregoing pages

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